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CHAUCER AND MODERN DREAM PSYCHOLOGY

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled Chaucer and Modern Dream Psychology submitted by Jack Lewis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. VARIETIES OF DREAM: THE TERM AND CHAUCER'S USES.....	13
III. <u>THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS</u>	33
IV. <u>THE HOUSE OF FAME</u>	47
V. <u>THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS</u>	61
VI. <u>THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN</u>	72
VII. CONCLUSION.....	82
FOOTNOTES.....	84
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	101
APPENDIX.....	115

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chaucer made extensive and varied use of dreams and dream references. Not only do dreams dominate the dream-vision works, which will be given extended consideration here, but they also appear with differing degrees of importance in Anelida and Arcite, in two of the tales of The Legend of Good Women,¹ in Troilus and Criseyde, and in more than half a dozen of The Canterbury Tales.² Additionally, dreams are mentioned in The Parson's Tale and the word "dream" is used with reference to waking experience in Venus and in The Second Nun's Tale. Both George Lyman Kittredge and John Livingston Lowes praised Chaucer's dream psychology; Walter C. Curry showed Chaucer to be quite knowledgeable in the dream lore of his day.³ In our time, dreams have been of basic importance in the development of psycho-therapeutic theories⁴ which have had such profound and general influence on our thinking. And dreams continue to attract psychological investigations of wide range.⁵ All of this makes attractive the possibility of attending to Chaucer's use of dreams and of bringing to bear, wherever possible, supporting or clarifying references to modern dream studies. It is the thesis of this investigation that such studies can be useful for our understanding of Chaucer's dream-vision poems and dream references.

But despite the inviting possibilities of applying dream psychology to Chaucer's poems, there seem to be few clear guidelines for such an approach in the critical literature on Chaucer. Some modern critics have made observations which reflect, or might be supported by, dream psychology, but without sufficient explanation to establish either the opportunities or the limitations of the perspective.⁶ At the same time, some critics have rejected references to dream psychology without an adequate hearing.⁷ Even so, each of the dream-vision poems has attracted some attention to its dream qualities, and, in one case at least, the direct relevance of the Freudian description of dreams has been called to attention.⁸

Generally speaking, the approach taken here rests on the assumption that there is some form of contact between actual dreams and literary ones. There is nothing new, of course, in that assumption. Sigmund Freud provides one instance in "Dreams in Folklore."⁹ Freud's motive is to study dream symbolism, and he remarks that it is easier to do so in products of folklore, since actual dreams are private while "these comic anecdotes . . . which are disguised as dreams, are intended as communications. . . ."¹⁰ Cicero has his brother Quintus cite literary dream material as evidence in their dialogue, De Divinatione. Of one of them, Quintus remarks: "This dream, I admit, is the fiction of a poet's brain, yet it is not contrary to our experience with real dreams."¹¹ And while Cicero refutes his brother's idea about divination through dreams, he makes no objection to the inclusion of literary dreams as evidence.¹²

Macrobius, a chief authority on the dream for the Middle Ages, treated in a similar way a fictional dream by Cicero himself. William Harris Stahl explains, in his introduction to Macrobius' Commentary on the Dream of Scipio, that Macrobius felt he had to defend Cicero's use of a dream fiction. "In reply to the clamorous objections of the Epicureans that imaginary events do not belong in serious treatises, Macrobius offers a classification of the types of fiction and points out that there is nothing incompatible between philosophical discourses and the type of fiction to which the vision and dream belong," Stahl tells us.¹³ And after defending it as fiction, Macrobius submits the Dream of Scipio to a system of classification, finding that it shares elements of three worthwhile types.¹⁴ What we notice in these treatments is that fictional dreams were not identified with actual dreams, but were treated as corresponding in certain ways with actual dream experience. Freud revealed, and no doubt the others thought, that the works themselves determined the extent to which assumptions about dreams would be applicable (e.g., in Freud's case, they were not to be treated as if they were uncommunicative). Each such approach must disclose its own intentions, of course.

Bertrand H. Bronson makes a valuable statement about the relationship between dream and poem in Chaucer that does not conflict with the approach taken here, but does show how the role of dream psychology might be improperly shunted aside. "Dreams in Chaucer's poetry are found to be artistic constructions that appeal for their

validity to artistic and aesthetic considerations,"¹⁵ he tells us, in contrasting them with what he understands to be actual dreams. There is, I believe, no reason to quarrel with that statement's positive contribution, but only to explain why it does not remove the need for the study proposed here.

If the statement is regarded as a comment on using dream studies in our reading of Chaucer, it is inadequate, since it implies the reader need not take dream reality into account. But Bronson himself points to some ways in which one should consider dreams. He notes that dreams lift "restrictions in the sum total of possibilities," and that Chaucer can take advantage of this fact.¹⁶ He grants that there is at least some dream quality in The Book of the Duchess (in "the suddenness of its opening transition").¹⁷ And he refers to "abnormal figures and features" which can be construed as dreamlike in the dream-vision works, although he believes that they are "at least partially referred and adjusted to the waking consciousness and to literary decorum."¹⁸

According to Bronson then, at least a question of dream verisimilitude is raised by Chaucer's works, and this study will show that it is not fully described in Bronson's brief account. But beyond the question of dream qualities which Chaucer's poems may possess is the question of the tasks dreams perform for their dreamers. We may ask whether Chaucer makes use of dreams in any way which is related to the interests of modern dream studies. There is also the task of providing substantial support for the principle

Bronson announces, that dream experience is governed by poetic considerations in Chaucer. We can scarcely understand what is meant by that without first taking dreams seriously.

Also important is the complex issue of the relationship between actual dreams and poetry. If a poet were to manage to work a recipe into his poem, attention to its function as a guide to cooking presumably would lead to questions irrelevant to poetry. But if a poet has worked a dream into his poem, attention to its function as dream is, I believe, capable of leading back to questions of poetry. A number of psychological studies indicate that possibility. Edward Tauber and Maurice Green discuss dreams as creative activity.¹⁹ It is a commonplace that dreams are dramatic in quality, and C. G. Jung extends that point to structure, indicating that a five act pattern is frequent.²⁰ Erich Fromm emphasizes the literary affinities of dreams by studying their use of symbolic language.²¹ The literary qualities of dreams will be referred to again later, but at the moment, it is enough to note that attention to psychological studies of dreams need not lead away from literary concerns. Dominance of aesthetic considerations over dream is not an obstacle to this study.

Bronson's comment could be construed as an objection to the study undertaken here on the ground that dream studies are irrelevant for poems. As an objection, it is one of two which automatically suggest themselves at the mention of a study which would utilize modern dream psychology for studying Chaucer. The second objection is that the modernness of the dream references disqualifies them for

critical use on Chaucer's poems. While Bronson's assertion is not, I believe, an objection in fact, and could in any case be reconciled with the aims of the paper, it will be more difficult to reconcile the relationship between modern thought (in so far as it is represented by dream psychologists) and medieval thought (in so far as it is represented by Chaucer).

In discussing D. W. Robertson's A Preface to Chaucer, R. E. Kaske is willing to declare that modern psychology is irrelevant to a study of Chaucer; he indicates that the matter requires no discussion.²² Dorothy Everett stresses the importance of historical study of Chaucer in a way which could be inimical to the study proposed here. She refers to "things in his writings that make little sense to us,"²³ and it is not clear what efforts she would exclude in trying to get them to make sense. But what she would like to turn to is clear. "We must either study them historically," she explains, "and try to see what they meant to their own age, and therefore probably to their author; or ignore them. . . ."²⁴ Robertson, having listed "psychological profundity, dramatic intensity, well-rounded characters, realism, and well-structured plot development" as context for the remark states: "No one thought in terms of psychology in the fourteenth century any more than he thought in terms of differential calculus or Marxist dialectic."²⁵ There are no doubt possible refinements of what is meant and choices of comparison which would make a good case for Robertson. Still, the assertion remains excessively sweeping and it may at least permit a search for exceptions.

But it is not here my intention to attack the individual positions indicated; the task is simply to preserve room for the special interests of this paper. And perhaps the best way to do that is to shift attention to quite different views about the meeting of modern with earlier ideas.

Meeting of old and modern thought on psychological matters is, in fact, by no means infrequent. In his History of Medical Psychology, Gregory Zilboorg makes the point that there is a ". . . certain universality in human psychology of which we should never cease to be aware: similar emotional states produce similar deeply seated psychological reactions and imagery, regardless of many cultural and historical differences." For that reason he states, "It is . . . possible for us to use the history of the ancient philosophical psychologies as a source for our understanding of the problems with which medicopsychological sciences of today find themselves confronted."²⁶ That Freud felt his discovery of the Oedipus complex was "confirmed by a legend" through Sophocles' play is, of course, famous.²⁷ Or to take a medieval instance, Jung devoted much attention to alchemical practices as studies in what he called the "individuation process."²⁸

Additionally, Jung has made extensive contributions to studies of archetypes. They are "mythological motifs or mythologems" which "are to be understood as specific forms and groups of images which occur not only at all times and in all places but also in individual dreams, fantasies, visions, and delusional ideas."²⁹

G. S. Brett accepts anticipation by Duns Scotus of the concept of the fringe of consciousness (that is, "the mind equivalent to a confused impression produced by the object and a clear perception determined by the active exercise of attention").³⁰ And Maurice Cohen believed he could claim that Chaucer's portrait of the Prioress matches Freud's description of the anal-erotic type.³¹ As to dreams themselves, Harold McCurdy's supplement to Freud's historical study of dream theories tells us of Aristotle's remarks on sleep and dream, "Taken together with a few remarks from Plato, and with due allowance for the partially obsolete physiology, they provide a theory which is decidedly modern in tone."³²

A look through the early chapters of Ralph L. Woods' anthology, The World of Dreams, is enough alone to suggest that along broad lines old dream lore is rich in anticipations of modern findings.³³ There is an unfriendly but not necessarily untrue explanation for that condition. With neurophysiological checks on sleep and dreaming in mind, Nathaniel Kleitmann in the revision of Sleep and Wakefulness published in 1963, states that "Until about ten years ago, practically all the information on dreaming was derived from the subjective experiences and reports of the dreamers."³⁴ The "detection, recall, and description" of dreams depended upon "the introspection, memory, and, perhaps, vividness of the imagination of the sleeper."³⁵ And for that reason, Kleitmann contends that " . . . the study of dreams is an ancient lore, and, whereas astrology had long ago given way to astronomy, concerning dream knowledge and understanding moderns were

not much further advanced than the ancients."³⁶ Whether for that or for other reasons as well, Fromm finds that "Modern dream interpretation (since the seventeenth century) is essentially a variant on the theories of antiquity and those of the Middle Ages, although certain new trends of thought made their appearance."³⁷

In view of such testimony it seems unlikely that modern dream psychology can have nothing to do with Chaucer's practice, at least to some extent and in general ways. Curry defended (though surely without great seriousness) his lack of modern reference in studying Chaucer's dream psychology by saying, "it is comforting to remember that Chaucer knew less about modern psychoanalytical theory regarding dreams than even the present writer. . . ."³⁸ But the question is not whether Chaucer knew psychoanalytical theories. The question is whether he and psycho-analysts may have known something in common, or at least whether Chaucer handled dreams from psychological, artistic or other motives, in a way that is clarified by reference to psycho-analytical or other modern theories. To utilize modern studies in that way, it is not necessary to claim that Chaucer anticipated modern findings. It is only necessary to suppose there may be coincidences of interest in dreams between modern studies and Chaucer, so that references to the one will help describe what is happening in the other. The likelihood for useful coincidence depends on these factors: modern dream psychology discusses dream qualities, and Chaucer may have drawn on dream experience for poetic imitation; modern dream studies have found dreams to be meaningful

experiences, and Chaucer has the problem of giving poetic dreams meaningful functions.

It is by no means my intention to claim that exploitation of modern dream theory provides the only approach to Chaucer's dreams. But it may have a contribution to make to the total task of understanding. It can be argued that the approach of this paper is a necessary one to the extent that Chaucer calls on us to take dream reality into account and to the extent that our individual experiences of dreams require the corrective or qualifying influence of specialized dream studies. Beyond that, the paper is motivated by the wish to remain in touch, though necessarily here it is only to slight extent, with the world of dreams and the things said about them. William Empson makes the point that because of the ever altering relationship between reader and poem, finality of treatment is not the critic's concern. Rather, he tells us, "It is the business of the critic to extract for his public what it wants," and he includes the possibility that the critic lead the way to the desire.³⁹ I would agree that there is no reason to finish with a poem, and in this case, propose to read Chaucer's poems again, this time with a psychological perspective. The paper accepts as valuable any continuities which may obtain between contemporary and medieval thought, psychology and literary study, and the creative potentialities of anyone as manifested in dreams and the special creative abilities of poets, while recognizing that approaches could be made which would seek out the differences between contemporary and medieval, psychology and literature,

man and poet. I am unable to believe that there is not room for both attitudes. That is not to say that the reader's attention will finally be directed to psychology. On the contrary, concepts about dreams will be broken off from their original context and bent to purposes at hand. Psychology of dreams is not the guide here, only a tool. But it is a tool which has intrinsic interest.

And at one point, initiative belongs to modern dream studies. Recent techniques for objective determination of the occurrence of dreaming (such as Kleitmann helped achieve and was thinking of in associating past and present dream lore) provide a firmer basis for investigating meanings of the term "dream" than has been available in the past. And if that attempt makes dream material seem complicated and indicates that our assertions about dream reality may need qualifications, I do not believe that the author of the Proem to The House of Fame would thereby be upset. In any case we need to know what manner of thing may be meant when we say "dreams." Aside from that, the paper will not move from modern dream study to Chaucer, but rather from the comments of literary critics about dreams and about issues in the poems which may benefit from dream reference, and, above all, from the discussions and practices of Chaucer himself, first as indicated in a brief survey of his total work and then poem by poem in the dream-visions. That procedure determines the eclectic manner in which I propose to select dream studies themselves for their relevance to Chaucer. Eclecticism is perhaps best suited to a layman's abilities, and is important for

keeping attention on the poems themselves. It would not only be rash to try, but beside the point here to follow up special interests of contending schools of thought concerning dreams. Wide agreement, clarity and accessibility of statement and, of course, applicability, are the factors in dream theory which will attract attention here.

If the discussion thus far has succeeded in its intention, it has served the thesis by showing that an opportunity exists for application of dream psychology to Chaucer's work, that such application reflects some recognizable values and may serve literary purposes. The specific ways in which Chaucer invites such applications remain to be seen.

CHAPTER II

VARIETIES OF DREAM: THE TERM AND CHAUCER'S USES

In the absence of general discussion concerning how to utilize dream studies in reading Chaucer's poems, and in view of the inherent complexities of the subject matter, it is not surprising that Chaucer critics have not, as far as I am aware, explored the semantics of the dream. That is to say, they have not dealt with differing definitions of "dream," nor explained at sufficient length what experiential content should be called to mind when they or Chaucer use the word "dream" or its synonyms. Curry does offer one definition (which will be cited later), but he is primarily concerned with dream causes and effects rather than contents. Bronson describes dream experience in the most general way. "If, on the level of experience, we ask about the properties of the dream-world," Bronson says, "the answer comes without delay. If there are restrictions in the sum total of possibilities--the characters, the kinds and combinations of beings--their regulation in dream has not yet been determined."¹ Even a statement at that level of generalization has its uses. Bronson is able, on the basis of it, to suggest that Chaucer could solve some problems of commenting on courtly and other aspects of love in The Book of the Duchess by appealing to freedom from proprieties: "A vision would liberate from the inconveniences of verisimilitude and would give the ironic imagination much freer, and probably safer, play."²

But in all, Bronson seems merely to be saying that the dream world may be different from the waking world and that Chaucer takes advantage of a possibility of avoiding the latter's demands. Bronson apparently does not try to follow Chaucer into the new world of the dream itself and ask whether its contents can to any degree be specified. Further, he stops short of telling us--although he may well have it in mind--that the dream world has the quality of being unusually, though perhaps not absolutely, convincing.³ Chaucer does not merely avoid fidelity to waking experience; he takes positive advantage of dream verisimilitude. Consequently we ought to look for something more than assessment of dreams by negation.

Modern studies of dreaming provide no simple answer to the semantic question raised, but they provide substantial basis for some discriminations that should contribute to clarity. In his article for New Directions in Psychology II, W. C. Dement asserts that primarily because of the "'private'" nature of dreams, "exactly what is meant by the word 'dream' has never been adequately defined."⁴ He proceeds, however, in a treatment very important for its general insight and its review of neurophysiological studies, to propose a definition based on a special quality of experience and to reveal along the way several kinds of psychic experience which might likewise be referred to as dreams. Even if we found Chaucer's own attitude about dreams to be casual, and it is far from that, we would do well as readers to take what advantage we can of such investigations. They alert us to standards by which to judge dream verisimilitude. Such

studies are needed also to help clarify the relationship of dreams to poetry. That no single meaning for the word "dream" has been agreed upon need not be a problem. For critical purposes, what is needed is attention to the scope of possible meanings.

Dreaming has indefinite boundaries because it lies among the complexities of thought, and thorough coverage of the conditions of dreams or conditions similar to dreams is out of the question. But fortunately, Chaucer himself can be of use in establishing borders for discussion. While in some cases the study proposed might be of use largely in helping the reader to see what areas of experience the poet has omitted, for Chaucer the study will be adequate if it permits us to describe what he has noticed. Whether Chaucer obtained his awareness by introspection, through conversation, from reading, or by sheer intuitive grasp, it happens that he made use of materials which make us think of a variety of psychic experiences which may reasonably be called dreams.

Thus, while no attempt will be made to describe all experiences which resemble dreams (which would include psychoneurotic thought, children's thought, primitive thought, for instance), nor even all dream experiences (which would include those under hypnosis and under the influence of drugs), a workable study can be made for our purposes as Chaucer readers. It entails matching material from modern dream studies with instances from Chaucer, to show what range of psychic activity we should bear in mind for Chaucer generally. And it will, consequently, serve as an introduction to Chaucer's

attitude about dreams, which we need to be aware of as background for the dream-vision poems themselves.

It can be said at the outset that "dream" may refer to psychic experience that occurs during sleep, during waking periods, and during transitional periods as well. Each condition is important here as a means of helping to emphasize differing features (not as a means of deciding whether a character was "really" awake or not). "Dream" may mean actual experience within the psychic processes of an individual (intra-psychic), or it may mean something which is not private, but public--that is, a dream account, with or without reference to intra-psychic happenings. Further, normal usage generally obscures the distinction between the actual event and the account, since we speak of writing a dream down or of telling a dream. We can begin with an attempt to focus on intra-psychic experience during sleep.

Dement emphasizes one type of intra-psychic experience which may be called dream. It is that which Dement supposes "does conform rather closely to what is generally called dreaming, and . . . has contributed most of the material that has been labeled 'dreaming' in the past. . . ." ⁵ Investigators have obtained reports from subjects awakened immediately after recurrent phases of sleep marked notably by rapid eye movements. Dement speculates that the reports reflect experiences in which a variety of mental processes occur, but which are dominated by "'sensory input'" that is "somehow generated by the nervous system itself, independent of the environment." ⁶ Curry's definition of a dream indicates that medieval psychology

reached a similar, though more restricted, conclusion: "A dream may be defined, in brief, as a sleep-experience caused by a disturbance in the Imagination; or better, it is a sort of phantasm originating in the movement of sense-images, or figures, or simulacra in the Imagination of the dreamer. One of the most curious facts about a dream is that, in the process of its unfolding, the sleeping man rests under the illusion that he is feeling the actual response of his senses to certain external stimuli. . . ."7 Some sort of mental activity seems to be continuous throughout sleep, but David Foulkes speaks of "rather dramatic shifts from plausible content to implausible content, from the everydayish to the bizarre . . ." as marking the mentation of rapid eye movement periods.⁸ Dement finds "long, detailed 'adventures' which included a wide variety of characters, events, and emotions."⁹ He further explains that dreams are "descriptions of an experience that included a temporal dimension (that is, something took place in time)" and that they "usually included several modes of imagery," though the imagery was "predominantly visual."¹⁰ Dement regrets that complete records of such dreams have not been reported, and explains that "the full impact of the detail and richness" of such experiences "cannot be conveyed by statistical tabulation."¹¹ But judging from descriptions and from the single full record¹² which Dement includes, it seems that the dream in this sense is a narrative which includes dramatic confrontations and is rich in imagery. It is perhaps such dream experience which Walter De La Mare had in mind in saying: "every dream worthy of

the name is itself a creation, an anonymous work of art, and may also be tinged with the poetic."¹³ And clearly, its general terms transfer quite readily to the dream sections of the dream-vision poems themselves. The relationship is, of course, broadly literary. But the dream Dement talks about is closer to some works of literature than to others, to Chaucer's dream-vision poetry than to lyric poetry, for instance.

That such dreams are by and large less coherent than dream-vision poems is likely enough; dream psychologists often stress the seeming incoherence of dreams. But the degree of coherence seems to vary. One cause of the variation is the manner of telling a dream, which can be isolated as a second major meaning for dream.

Norman Malcolm isolated that meaning, severing it completely from intra-psychic experience, by saying, in effect, that we can discover nothing more about a dream than that it is a story about something which did not happen in actuality.¹⁴ We need not agree that a dream must be a report with nothing lying behind it,¹⁵ but telling is always an aspect of any communicated dream. No matter how accurately a dream report may describe what took place, there is still a difference between the psychic event and the verbal account. Consequently, it is not surprising to find Erik H. Erikson saying, "A dream is a verbal report," adding that it is "of a series of remembered images, mostly visual, which are usually endowed with affect."¹⁶ Freud not only spoke of how reporting affects the dream event, but saw the process at work during sleep. Freud distinguishes

between characteristic dream work (which entails dramatization, concretization, condensation, symbolization) and "secondary revision" which brings the dream closer to intelligible waking experience.¹⁷ When we tell a dream, he notes, "we find at work once more the process we have described as the secondary . . . revision" leading to "distortion," (although revisions themselves, he believes, will lead associatively back to thoughts underlying the dream).¹⁸

Chaucer shows his awareness of dream-telling in more than one way. He does so in a minor way (though an interesting one, as we will see later) by means of the Wife's conduct in "The Wife of Bath's Prologue." The Wife tells a prospective husband that she "mette of hym al nyght" (III, 577).¹⁹ But she reveals to us that "al was fals; I dremed of it right naught"(582). In a major way he does it by blurring the distinction between the dream (that is the dream section of a poem) and the account of it sufficiently to suggest that he wishes to play with the notion that the poem is the dream of the poet. The blurring is largely limited to word play in The Book of the Duchess. Awakening from a dream in which he encountered the knight in black, the dreamer reacts to what has occurred:

Thoghte I, 'Thys ys so queynt a sweven
That I wol, be processe of tyme,
Fonde to put this sweven in ryme. . . .
(1330-32)

In that passage, Chaucer points to a dream apart from a poem, that is, to something which did not occur in rhyme, but invited presentation in rhyme. But, as Chaucer knew, the only reference "this sweven" can have for the reader, is the poetic account itself. Further, however,

the final words of the poem refer to material which includes the passage just given. That is, the poem ends, "This was my sweven; now hit ys doon"(1334). That, it would seem, most suitably refers to the full course of the poem.

The lines at the end of The Parliament of Fowls speak of the poet's waking to read further so that he "shal mete som thyng for to fare/ The bet . . ."(698-9). Some critics have understood this to mean that Chaucer hoped to fare better as a poet.²⁰ Since what Chaucer has read previously led to the Afffrican of his dream, and since Afffrican offered to show the dreamer something to write about ("And if thow haddest connyng for t'endite,/ I shal the shewe mater of to wryte"(167-8)), that understanding seems reasonable. The dream-vision form, of course, means that a dream is written as a poem. But Chaucer is calling self-reflective attention to that fact. In this case, Chaucer seems to single out the dream section itself for his comment. In his dream he was to find matter to write; hence in writing his dream, he has written the matter.

As for The House of Fame, the Kurath-Kuhn Middle English Dictionary cites this poem as an instance for the necessarily ambiguous definition of "avision" as: "Dreaming: a dream or vision experienced in sleep; a nightmare; also, a poetic vision." In the dream section of The House of Fame, Chaucer's dreamer seeks "tydings," thereby reproducing in part the effect in The Parliament of Fowls, if we accept R. C. Goffin's explanation of "tydings" as "tale" or "poetic material."²¹ That is, the dream of searching for narrative material

provides, upon being told, an actual narrative. But Chaucer very playfully obscures the difference between dream and poem in another way as well. The first invocation in The House of Fame is to the god of sleep, "Yf every drem stonde in his myght" (80). . But the poet does not appeal for a dream as such. He prays that "he wol me spede/ My sweven for to telle aryght"(79). Chaucer seems to suggest that the process of dreaming is a process of composing a poetic account.

But in addition to "dream" as a special sort of intrapsychic experience and as a telling, "dream" often is thought of as any sort of psychic experience whatever during sleep. Freud found in dreams differences "in their apparent duration, as well as in their clarity, in the amount of affect accompanying them, in the possibility of retaining them, and so on."²² Further, he explained, "some are very short and comprise only a single image or a few, a single thought, or even a single word" while "others are uncommonly rich. . . ."²³ Fromm takes variety as the basis for his definition: "In view of the fact that there is no expression of mental activity which does not appear in the dream, I believe that the only description of the nature of dreams that does not distort or narrow down the phenomenon is the broad one that dreaming is a meaningful and significant expression of any kind of mental activity under the condition of sleep."²⁴

Whether we think of dream in that way may well affect the willingness with which we attend to dreams, since from that definition it easily follows, as Fromm points out, that "we are not only less reasonable

and less decent in our dreams but . . . also more intelligent, wiser, and capable of better judgment. . . ."25

In any case, that definition is an aid to understanding many of Chaucer's dream references outside the dream-visions themselves. For instance, it permits us to understand vaguely imagined "warnings" as occurring in dreams (The Legend of Good Women, F, 2658-60).²⁶ It provides for short "adventures" such as those reported by Chantecleer (Canterbury Tales, VII, 2898-2906), or Cresus (Canterbury Tales, VII, 2743, 2746). Furthermore, Foulkes reports that mentation outside rapid eye movement periods may be "intimately associated with recent and everydayish activities . . . sometimes to the point of consisting purely of memories of such events."²⁷ That understanding seems close to the spirit of much of the passage Chaucer borrows for The Parliament of Fowls:

The very hunttere, slepyng in his bed,
To wode ayeyn his mynde goth anon;
The juge dremeth how his plees been sped;
The cartere dremeth how his cartes gon;
The riche, of gold; the knyght fyght with his fon. . . .²⁸
(99-103)

It also seems to account for Criseyde's statement that she dreamed of Pandarus all night (Troilus and Criseyde, II, 89-90). And perhaps somewhere in this large category of meaning belong as well the several instances of restless, complaining sleep--that of Troilus, for example (Troilus and Criseyde, V, 246-52), or that predicted for Constance (Canterbury Tales, II, 803-5).

Boundaries for the different experiences cannot be rigidly fixed, nor is certainty in finding the most appropriate meaning of

the reference to dreams example by example to be expected. It is important, nevertheless, to suggest what distinctions we can in order to make ourselves sensitive to relevant experiences and to appreciate Chaucer's breadth of interest.

Moving out of the condition of sleep itself we come to hypnagogic imagery (that is, imagery arising during the transition from waking to sleep) such as that studied by Herbert Silberer. Silberer describes "translation of thoughts into pictures," which he notes, following Freud, is "one of the essential features of dream-formation."²⁹ And Kleitmann refers to similar studies which describe "a vacillation between wakefulness and sleep, when hypnagogic hallucinations are confused with dreams."³⁰ While we cannot decide whether a fictional character is "really" asleep or not when he is credited with a dream, it seems more appropriate for certain instances in Chaucer to refer to hypnagogic imagery than to mentation in general. For example, when Criseyde dreams of an eagle which tears out her heart painlessly (Troilus and Criseyde, II, 925-31), we are very close to just such a concretizing of abstract consideration as Silberer describes. The passage does not so much narrate a short "adventure" as it depicts thought.

Finally, for purposes of this survey of dream meanings, "dream" may refer to waking fantasies, which Freud describes as "imagined satisfaction of ambitious, megalomaniac, erotic wishes."³¹ Fantasies may be picked up by dreams of sleep, Freud explains, wholly or only in parts which evoke the rest through association.³² But the

intimate relationship possible between dream and fantasy need not depend on such incorporation. Werner Wolff relates evidence for a wide-spread assumption of dream psychologists that fantasy and dream reflect "the unique and characteristic patterns of the individual."³³ Having asked "several people to write up a dream, a fantasy, just as they come to them," he found each pair shared a number of features.³⁴ We might well use literary terms for describing such features as including common narrative devices, symbolic content, thematic concern and atmosphere.³⁵ Our own reactions to dream material in poems may well draw on our experience with fantasies as well as night dreams, even though we do not wish to limit dreams to wish-fulfilling functions.

Chaucer alludes to waking fantasy or day-dream both in quite brief and somewhat detailed ways, and stresses its wishful (hence often misleading) qualities. For instance, Chaucer describes the fears of Troilus and Criseyde in an early stage of their love: "al this thyng but nyce dremes were" (Troilus and Criseyde, III, 1342). Truth is set sharply against dreams as fantasy in conversation between Tiburce and Valerian in "The Second Nun's Tale." "Seistow this to me/ In soothnesse, or in dream I herkne this?" Tiburce asks. "In dremes," Valerian replies, "han we be/ Unto this tyme, brother myn, ywis" (Canterbury Tales, VIII, 260-63). "The Complaint of Venus" declares that it is proper that men serving love "Pleyne in slepyng, and dremen at the daunce"(31). Chaucer dwells longer on the fantasy of Troilus after he first sees Criseyde. Alone in his chamber

. . . as he sat and wook, his spirit mette
 That he hire saugh a-temple, and al the wise
 Right of hire look, and gan it newe avise.
 (Troilus and Criseyde, I, 362-4)

He continues by describing how Troilus made "a mirour of his mynde,/
 In which he saugh al holly hire figure"(365-7).³⁶

In thus learning what areas of psychic experience we must be sensitive to in following Chaucer's use of the term "dream" and its synonyms, we have discovered something of his attitude. But the approach taken has not been the customary one, which is to ask what Chaucer had to say directly about dream theories. The relevant passages are found at the beginning of The House of Fame, in the conversation between Pandarus and Troilus in Book V of Troilus and Criseyde, and in the opening section of "The Nun's Priest's Tale." But as statements about dreams, the passages have surprisingly narrow focus. The dominating questions are three in number: what the causes of dream are, whether dreams make reliable predictions, and how correct interpretations can be assured. It is true that attendant matters are touched on. One could specify reference to dream classifications, or to the appearance of symbolism in dream in The House of Fame, or to dream authorities (for purposes of determining proper interpretation), but statement of the three issues provides a fair summary of what the passages are about. We have already discovered, however, that Chaucer is interested in more aspects of dream than that. He is interested in the variety of surface qualities which dream experiences entail, from rather vague thought-contents to imaging of ideas, to short "adventures," to full scale narratives. He is interested in the

wilful production of imaginings. He is interested in dream as having the property of being a thing told. None of these interests, representing his practising concerns, are properly disclosed by the three passages of direct discussion referred to above.

Whatever conclusion we reach about Chaucer's thinking on the basis of the three passages then, will by no means exhaust the range of conclusions about Chaucer's considerations of dreams. And since the general point of the first passage is that dream-lore is very complex, and since the other two passages represent disputes which are not fully resolved by the participants, it is difficult to see how we can reach conclusions much beyond the following: Chaucer liked to consider numerous possibilities without, if possible, committing himself to any one of them. Granting that much concerning Chaucer's own thinking, we should see further whether the passages have dramatic and thematic functions which account for their contents.

Investigation of the passages from the changed perspective suggested is part of the task of further investigations of Chaucer's thought. It is necessary to shift emphasis away from the appearance of dream experiences in Chaucer's poems to the question of how he utilizes them. The existence of four poems dominated by dreams and the additional numerous references to dreams throughout his work suggest that Chaucer maintained an active interest in man's dream experiences.

That Chaucer's interest in dreams is reflected in his poems in a variety of ways can be indicated if we ask what functions he

attributes to dreams. It is not now my intention to press Chaucer for commitments, but only to discover his concerns. We find that dreams can create. For a complaint by Dido in The House of Fame, the poet claims, he "mette" it, specifying, "Non other auctor allegge I"(313-314). Dreams may inspire creation. At least so implies the Franklyn by denying he knows the "Colours of rethoryk," (Canterbury Tales, V, 726): "I sleep never on the Mount of Pernaso" (Canterbury Tales, V, 721).³⁷ Dreams may advise. Arcite is told in a dream to go to Athens where there "is thee shapen of thy wo an ende" (Canterbury Tales, I, 1391-92). Dreams may predict. Chauntecleer's meeting with the fox is previewed in his dream (Canterbury Tales, VII, 2898-2906). Dreams may reveal what has already taken place. That is the case in the tale related by Chauntecleer of the man who dreamed of his companion's murder (Canterbury Tales, VII, 3002-23), and is essentially the case for Troilus' dream of a boar holding Criseyde (Troilus and Criseyde, V, 1238-41).

The impression that Chaucer found a variety of uses for dreams is confirmed if we list some of the variety of literary functions they serve. Warning or predictive dreams, of course, foreshadow events. Dreams may serve narrative functions, as they do for Troilus. His nightmarish dreaming (V, 240-52) is a stage of his activities like any other, and his dream of the boar leads him to seek out interpretation and confirm suspicions. A dream may simply contribute to character study, as does that of Sir Thopas, whose dream of an elf queen is one of a series of inappropriate experiences

(Canterbury Tales, VII, 787-9). Dreams provide one topic among others in a non-dramatic context in "The Parson's Tale" (Canterbury Tales, X, 120-25, 600-610, 910-15). Dreams provide an ingredient of dramatic confrontation, as in "The Nun's Priest's Tale," to return to the passages of direct dream discussion. If we agree with Victor Hamm in viewing "heigh imaginacioun" as a power of superior insight acting in a dream,³⁸ the dream insight of Chauntecleer is pitted against the practical sense of Pertelote. In Troilus and Criseyde, what is said about dreams reflects Troilus' suspicions and fears on the one hand and Pandarus' wish to comfort and perhaps his defensive need to deny that his plans have gone wrong on the other.

A final examination of Chaucer's attitude concerns a characteristically modern question. Chaucer's poetry has already shown itself to be responsive to the application of concepts taken from modern studies of the dream. But what is perhaps the single most crucial modern concept has not been singled out, although it has been treated in passing. That question is whether Chaucer views the dreams in his poems as peculiarly personal for the characters who have them. A shift of attention to studies of another poet will help make the point clear.

Ludwig Binswanger makes a useful comment about how Penelope's dream (Book 19 of Homer's Odyssey) is distinctly unmodern. Concerning the eagle's killing of the geese, Binswanger remarks, "Neither poet nor reader thinks of this as representing subjective processes in the dreamer's psyche;" rather, he explains, the dream "signifies an

external event, namely Odysseus' slaying of the suitors."³⁹ Modern dream interpreters characteristically look for influences on the dream from the life experiences of the dreamer, and they try to understand the meaning of the dream for the individual's behaviour. Further they attempt to discover what happens to the dreamer within his dreams, whether he appears in his own person or through identification with other figures or objects representing his personality in general or certain aspects of it. Whether the dream is interpreted as attempted wish-fulfillment (Freud), a compensation (Jung), an attempt to solve problems (Wilhelm Stekel), a projection of mental contents (Calvin S. Hall), or a mode of being alone (Binswanger), emphasis is radically personal.⁴⁰

In Homer, the dream is not, however, entirely divorced from the personal. Kate Gordon concludes from her study of Homer's dreams in general that while dream "is alleged to have an inspiration from outside the dreamer's ordinary thought," its "sensuous content is derived in each case from the dreamer's waking life, and its emotional tone reflects his desires."⁴¹ (We might note that Penelope's dream cited above clearly fulfills the conditions Gordon names; it reflects what Penelope wishes would happen, and the geese eating wheat, Homer troubles to specify, were taken from Penelope's actual surroundings.)⁴² And Plato's famous anticipation of Freudian interests sets an early precedent of great stress on conditions of the individual personality.⁴³

In Chaucer we find, as we might expect, awareness of the general range of possibilities. Through Chaucer's allusion to the

dream of Andromacha in "The Nun's Priest's Tale" (Canterbury Tales, VII, 3141 ff.), to his use of the dream of Alcyone in The Book of the Duchess (201 ff.), and of Arcite's dream of advice (Canterbury Tales, I, 1391-92), Chaucer includes dreams close to the Homeric type (for which causes are said to be external). But for the most part, Chaucer's emphasis is closer to the modern one in the sense suggested. Dreams in which lovers complain, for instance, are evidently products of their circumstances and refer to their conditions. Robertson cites the nightmarish dreams of Troilus after Criseyde has left as "symbolic revelations of his actual situation" (Troilus and Criseyde, V, 246 ff.).⁴⁴ Deliberate fantasies are, of course, similarly personal.

The Wife of Bath designed her dream account to attract a prospective husband by means of objective reference. The dream speaks of blood and "blood bitokeneth gold," she explains (Canterbury Tales, III, 581). But it is difficult not to believe that at least Chaucer (and perhaps the Wife herself with some degree of awareness) sees the dream as attempting to attract by subjective means as well. The dream depicts the clerk of the dream as aggressive and the wife as submissive, or even as a victim (and perhaps virginal as well). Since the reader has already been informed that the wife has behaved as "the whippe"(175) with her husbands, context makes her dream-role significant. And it has already been suggested that Criseyde's dream of the eagle is less like a prediction than a decision, a preparation for her behavior. How the dream-visions themselves appear from the perspective of subjective-objective reference will be discussed. But only in The

Book of the Duchess, I suppose, is there a serious possibility of objective reference. In view of these considerations, it seems clear that characteristically modern interests are relevant for Chaucer's dream uses.

A second approach to the question of the characteristically modern might also be noted. Walther Riese, reviewing "The Pre-Freudian Origins of Psychoanalysis" states what is probably a consensus: "As a rule, the ancients believed that the dreams predicted the future, while in the psychoanalytic interpretations dreams are messengers of the dreamer's past and present experiences."⁴⁵ Again Chaucer's work makes itself accessible to modern interests. The variety of dream attributes pointed out, and the close attachment of many dreams to the personal circumstances of the dreamer discussed reveal that Chaucer's interests are not confined to dream prediction. And for none of the dream-vision poems does Chaucer make the claim found in The Romaunt of the Rose that "in that sweven is never a del/ That it nys afterward befalle"(28-29).⁴⁶

Before turning to separate discussion of the dream-vision poems, we have obtained a general acquaintance with opportunities and problems for the basic approach of this paper. It has been shown that "dream" is not a simple concept, for Chaucer or for modern readers. To discover that that is the case creates some problems; for instance, it suggests that the customary question in Chaucer studies about dream verisimilitude is difficult to answer. At the same time it should help to bring to bear a wider range of experience in reading

Chaucer than might otherwise be considered. Similarly it reveals that there is no easy way to separate dream experience from poetic account, but thereby suggests that the dream is a peculiarly appropriate companion for poems. It has been shown that Chaucer was aware of various dream experiences and was sensitive to the question of the relationship between dream and poem. It has been shown further that Chaucer explored various uses for and attributes of dreams. And it has been shown that his work responds both to modern dream studies reflecting general interests and modern dream studies reflecting special modern concerns. We can then with confidence pursue the question of the relevance of dream studies to Chaucer's dream-vision poems.

CHAPTER III

THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS

Kittredge opened the issue of dreamlike qualities in Chaucer's work half a century ago in connection with The Book of the Duchess. Chaucer had "a strong sense of fact," Kittredge declared, "and his Book of the Duchess is really like a dream."¹ Its dreamlike effect was one, said Kittredge, "which every reader must instantly admit,"² and he adduced as evidence "the naïveté of the Dreamer's temperament" together with "a number of delicate touches, almost too elusive to isolate" such as the lack of surprise at the talk of Emperor Octavian and the sudden disappearances of the dreamer's horse and the whelp which he follows.³ The issue came to be narrowed by a number of critics to narrative factors, and the appeal to dream verisimilitude was sometimes rejected on that basis. For example, W. H. French makes an issue of not finding "inconsequence in the action itself."⁴ Charles Muscatine discovers the inconsequence, but does not want to attribute it to dream verisimilitude. He would not like "to attribute the success of the frame to what has often been called Chaucer's 'flawless' dream psychology,"⁵ since, he explains: "It is difficult to distinguish the surface incoherence of dream sequence from the incoherence of plot sequence that is characteristic of conventional narrative of this kind."⁶

On the basis of the evidence of this study, it is perhaps possible to suggest some adjustment of the contending claims which will permit the best advantage to be taken of Kittredge's underlying point. It is immediately clear that complexities of dream experience cannot be accounted for on so narrow a basis as narrative incoherence. The proper response to Kittredge's point is to broaden the basis for dream verisimilitude, not narrow it. On the other hand, Kittredge's claim that the reader's acknowledgement of dream verisimilitude is necessary, is dubious. By means of the recently developed techniques which permit examiners to know what a subject is dreaming, it may eventually be possible to point to dream structures which are universally experienced. But until then, there seems to be reason to suppose dream experiences may in fact differ markedly.⁷ As this study has stressed, dream experience intersects other psychic and creative activities. When we are unable to know how a work originated, but only how it appears, there may well be some doubt about what experiences of his own the reader should call to mind in responding to the work.⁸

Peter McKellar, for instance, would emphasize the common properties which the dream holds with other manifestations of thought. "The word 'thinking' is frequently confined, both in technical and lay discussions, to processes of the reasoning, logical and reality-adjusted type," he tells us, "but in the present study these will be regarded as only one of two kinds of thinking. The second kind--or other end of the scale of thinking--is represented

by dreaming, waking fantasy, the occurrences that sometimes accompany falling asleep and waking up, hallucination, and certain other phenomena that are prominent in psychosis."⁹ Still, since the poems in question call themselves dreams, it seems reasonable to describe as dreamlike those qualities in the poems which dreams help us recognize, even though the qualities are shared by other mental behaviour. In using the appeal to dream qualities for descriptive purposes, commentators should, for clarity, specify whenever possible the understanding of dream which they employ.

We should then look for ways to broaden the coverage of dreamlike qualities, while abandoning the insistence that every reader relate experiences in the same way. Bronson takes a step toward broader coverage by summarizing dream qualities of the Book of the Duchess:

The way in which one episode opens into another without the logical connections or transitions: the Dreamer awakened into his dream by a burst of bird-song, to find himself on his bed with the morning sun making kaleidoscopic patterns through the windows of his chamber, richly stained with the Troy legend, and all the walls painted with the scenes of the Romance of the Rose; sounds outside of preparations for a royal hunt; the Dreamer's taking his horse at once and joining the party; the recall from the hunt; the disappearance of his horse ("I was go walked fro my tree"); the appearance and vanishing of the puppy--no hunting-dog, certainly; the flowery path through the woods full of wild creatures; the discovery of the handsome knight sitting against a huge oak and lost in grief--all this has the familiar but unforeseen and strange air of a dream.¹⁰

Beyond these matters, attention should be called to some further effects for which Freud provides the useful terms, symbolization,

condensation, and displacement. In dream studies "symbolization" may be taken to refer to one for one translation of elements, such as Freud summarizes in his Chapter on "Representation by Symbols,"¹¹ but it is not always understood that way. Fromm understands symbols as "sensory expressions . . . standing for . . . an inner experience"¹² which may have "more than one meaning in accordance with different kinds of experiences which can be connected with one and the same natural phenomenon."¹³ Frederick A. Weiss, concerned with the possibility that "highly constructive and creative emotions and thoughts" may appear in dreams,¹⁴ asserts that dream symbols are "dynamic--not static or fixed" and are "multidimensional."¹⁵

"Condensation" can be taken to refer to combination and fusing of elements in a single object.¹⁶ "Displacement" refers, in the most general sense, which is pertinent here, to the appearance of a surprising degree of significance in something. (Freud cites the handkerchief in Othello as an instance.¹⁷) Since the terms are useful for describing poetry in general, their application is not intended to distinguish a dream poem from other poems. Some instances, nevertheless, seem peculiarly relevant for dream quality. There is a prominent case of displacement in The Book of the Duchess when the knight endows a loss at chess with great emotional significance. To avoid naming the actual cause of his complaint the knight states that fate "staal on me and tok my fers"(654). The usefulness of the term "displacement" lies in emphasizing evasiveness on the part of the knight. The image of "hert-huntyng" is a condensation combining

literal and figurative allusions. An animal is hunted, but a heart is hunted as well, in more than one sense, no doubt. The dreamer hunts down the troubled heart of the knight. The knight hunts out the matter of the heart, that is the loved lady. There are further dream qualities in the symbolic use of setting at the outset of the dream section, and in the role of the knight. Both points will be considered in connection with the course of action.

The conduct of the dialogue itself seems, however, to constitute an important exception to dreamlike quality. While there may be accounts of actual dreams which match the dialogue, that section would generally be thought of as undreamlike, I believe, on the following grounds: the scene is too static (we are not informed that physical changes occur during the conversation); the conversation is sustained for a surprising length of time; and the participants are too deliberate in their responses to each other. In my opinion at least, Kittredge's conclusion seems quite correct: "I do not contend that Chaucer carried out his dream-psychology in a thoroughgoing and consistent manner. But assuredly, in various details, he brought the experience of the Dreamer, with admirable art, near to the actual phenomena of the dream-life."¹⁸

Traditionally, critics have understood the knight in black to represent John of Gaunt and the lady, his deceased wife Blanche. But Samuel Schoenbaum takes a step away from emphasis on John of Gaunt by suggesting that the poem aims at "a more generalized expression of the grief felt upon the loss of a loved one," instead of one limited

to a particular historical incident.¹⁹ And other critics have gone still further by replacing Gaunt with the dreamer himself. Georgia Crampton declares that the knight as a projection of the dreamer "seems patent to the modern reader familiar with current lore about links between dreams and the subconscious."²⁰ Bernard F. Huppé and D. W. Robertson say that "the Black Knight was not intended as the dream representative of John of Gaunt, but rather as a sorrowing alter ego of the speaker in the poem."²¹ Apart from application of specifically Christian symbolism, their reading and the one offered here are quite close on a number of points. But Huppé and Robertson specifically disclaim psychological interest. They say, for example, that "inner divisions" in which there is dialogue between "two aspects of a single person" (such as in Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy and here as well) are "not aspects of 'psychology' in the modern sense, but of moral philosophy."²² In part then, differences in the interpretation here and that of Huppé and Robertson rest quite clearly in preferences for differing explanatory systems. I might add that such concepts as "alter ego" and "inner division" seem to be ineluctably psychological, though they may, of course, appear in contexts which have purposes beyond the psychological.

Just as one can find a "more generalized expression" of grief, so one can find more generalized personalities than John of Gaunt and his wife. The knight appears in black and speaks of himself as sorrow itself: "For y am sorwe, and sorwe ys y"(597-98).

Without discussing Jung's theories directly, D. S. Brewer seems to have them in mind in saying of "good fair Whyte": "The description here is diffuse and conventional; but the convention itself is still of power to interest and please us; the serene, sweet, golden-haired, beautiful lady; she is, after all, an archetypal image in our deepest consciousness; how should she fail to move us?"²³

Brewer may or may not be thinking of archetype in precisely the way Jung means it when, for instance, he speaks of archetypes arising in the unconscious on the basis of typical experiences of man and of their holding a numinous fascination.²⁴ But at least a loose relationship to Jung's theories seems to be useful for pointing to the archetypal "feel" of characters or objects which are strange or impressive, have general significance and are likely to recur in a wide range of story material.

Bronson's reading accepts a fundamental relationship between the dreamer and the knight, but still retains John of Gaunt as the chief figure. He finds that "By a wonderful leap of psychological insight . . . his private grief has been renounced by the Dreamer, to reappear externalized and projected upon the figure of the grieving knight."²⁵ In that sense the "knight is the Dreamer's surrogate,"²⁶ but the two figures differ and their sources of sorrow differ. In the interpretation offered here the interests of the dreamer are followed throughout, and the meeting with the knight is taken as a meeting with the dreamer's self; but this does not

imply any intention of quarreling with Bronson's view (his reading of the dialogue, for instance, seems excellent even from the standpoint adopted here). As indicated by the existence of the relationship Bronson points to, the poem carries more than one stratum of meaning. The reader may follow the interests of either part of the relationship, that is, of either the dreamer or the knight.

Chaucer invites a reading centered on the dreamer by taking such care to link dreamer and knight, to establish the life situation of the dreamer and to show the effect of the dream on the dreamer. Bronson calls attention to similarities of condition. Both are out of accord with nature in their suffering (18-21 and 467-9); for both the spirit suffers loss of quickness (25-26 and 489-92); and both are out of touch with their surroundings (6-7, 11-13 and 509-11).²⁷ Additionally, both are described as naked. The dreamer lay "in my bed al naked"(293), while the knight explains that he is one whom "deth hath mad al naked/ Of al the blysse that ever was maked"(577-78). Both speak of physicians who do not come to their aid. "For there is phisicien but oon/ That may me hele; but that is don"(39-40), the dreamer states. And the knight asserts: "Ne hele me may no phisicien"(571). Also Chaucer makes a point of having the dreamer immediately know the knight's thoughts at one point:

. . . he spak noght,
But argued with his owne thoght,
And in hys wyt disputed faste
Why and how hys lyf myght laste.
(503-6)

Dream psychologists generally investigate the life pattern of the dreamer in relation to his dreams. That approach is applicable to The Book of the Duchess. The dreamer's life situation is generally clear, but its details should be explored in accordance with the poem's development. The narrator is in despair and feels close to death. He wonders how he can live, cries that "Defaute of slep and hevynesse/ Hath sleyn my spirit of quyknesse,"(25-26) and says he would have been "Delven everydel,/ And ded, ryght thurgh defaute of slep . . ."(222-23) if he had not responded as he did to the tale of Seys and Alcyone. The "sorwful ymagynacioun"(14) and "fantasies"(28) in his mind, taken in conjunction with his concern about death and with what we learn later of the knight's longing for death, seem to include thoughts of suicide. He is incapable of normal emotion

Al is ylyche good to me--
 Joye or sorowe, wherso hyt be--
 For I have felynge in nothyng. . . .
 (9-11)

And he is in general mental disorder and confusion, "as yt were, a mased thyng,/ Alway in poynt to falle a-down"(12-13). Finally he is unwilling or unable to describe fully the causes for his condition. He says only that the cause of his sleeplessness with its consequent despair is perhaps ("as I gesse,"35) a "sicknesse" that he has suffered for some years. And, rather vaguely, he tells us that there is "phisicien but oon/ That may me hele; but that is don"(39-40). Since the direct concern throughout the poem (that is, with the tale of Seys and Alcyone and the knight in black) is with lovers who have lost loved ones; there is no need to suppose the narrator is referring

to anything else.²⁸ The physician for his love ailment is a lady who is literally or figuratively dead to him.

In that condition, the narrator attempts to divert himself with a book. The book, he explains, is better than chess, a reference which, we may suppose, is supplied with a motive within the dream since the game is associated with loss of the lady. In any case, the choice of the book helps further explain the dreamer's state of mind. Its attractiveness depends on its being written formerly "While men loved the law of kinde,"(56) and the dreamer has already suggested that he is concerned about living "agaynes kynde"(16). The book performs the further function of preparing for royal figures in the dream. (Freud would refer to "day's residue" being picked up by the dream.²⁹) The specific tale chosen presents a variant of the dreamer's own problem. Alcyone has lost her beloved and does not know it: the narrator presumably has lost his love and does not want to acknowledge the fact. Also the specific tale brings some measure of hope to the narrator. Alcyone prayed for a revelation in a dream,³⁰ and Morpheus was the means. While he treats doing so as "game"(238) and asks only for sleep instead of a dream, the narrator turns to Alcyone's source of aid. And the dream that ensues indeed provides aid.

The dreamer awakens in his dream to dawn and strong light. The light of waking consciousness had not availed him, but sleep brings a change. Dream psychologists take settings seriously, as revealing "something about the dreamer's conception of himself";³¹

and Jung cites a particularly appropriate instance for this case of a dream-setting which depicts the therapeutic situation in a way which benefits the therapy.³² The light for Chaucer's dreamer is accompanied by a number of other impressive elements. There is the harmony of birds singing a "moste solempne servise"(302), and his whole chamber is painted with material appropriate for talk of love in a courtly manner. Outside his chamber, the dreamer learns a king is conducting a hunt, thereby lending authority to the dreamer's parallel hunt. Prognosis would seem favorable.

There is wide critical agreement that the dream is consolatory for the knight, and the same holds true for the dreamer. Given the transfer of attention to the dreamer himself, Bronson's account of the course of the dialogue is generally applicable. Of special importance for the view here is the fact that, if only in a dream, the narrator takes up his task. He comes to talk of his lost love. He comes to acknowledge that she is dead, although that alone is not enough (as the early statement of her death by the knight shows). He also needs to recall the course of his life with her. In doing so, he comes to learn, as J. Burke Severs puts it (speaking of the knight), that "it is better to have loved and lost than to have loved and been rejected or to have loved and been deserted."³³ And he becomes able to realize that he does not have cause to regret having loved.

"Repentaunce! nay, fy!" quod he
 "Shoulde y now repente me
 To love?"

(1115-17)

But to emphasize the achievement of the dream leaves something of a problem. Bronson asserts that both knight and dreamer receive some consolation, but says of the dreamer: ". . . the beginning of his narrative, which is also in a sense the ending, encloses the poem with his melancholy."³⁴ One might suggest, with some justice, that the dream can be effective in consolation even in the absence of the dreamer's conscious awareness of it. But the poem provides more definite contact between the dream and the waking life than that, since there is a reaction to it. The dream was "only swete"(276), we learn. And we must not forget that it in fact interrupted the condition of sleeplessness which is the basis for the description of the opening 43 lines. What those lines represent then, in fact, is not the dreamer's condition at the end of his dream. Rather they represent a reconsideration of his condition. The narrator is saying in effect: I am in a desperate condition. I am unable to sleep. My thoughts are black. Even so, I did have the other day a wonderful dream. And under its influence, I am now in the process of thinking over my general situation. My suffering is, I realize, against nature. Perhaps something can be done.

Such a reading, it seems, is most consistent with the ending of the dream and of the poem. Something has been accomplished. The hunt ends. And striking twelve, the bell marks, according to Bronson's exposition, an end and a beginning³⁵ and is an "auditory image of organized civility," as another critic says.³⁶ The king returns to his castle, indicating that order rules. And, above all, the poet

has determined (and presumably through the influence of the dream is able) to perform the orderly task of putting "this sweven in ryme"(1332). Crampton also appropriately suggests that the narrator has decided to "make of his dream . . . a bequest to the future like Ovid's story of Alcyone and Ceyx."³⁷ The dream then, it would seem, has corrected or is serving to correct the imbalance of excessive sorrow so that life can go on.

In psychological terms, the dream could be called "compensatory." As Jung treats it, the concept of compensation is quite flexible. Broadly, compensation is a "function of the unconscious whereby those thoughts, inclinations, and tendencies which in conscious life are too little valued come spontaneously into action during the sleeping state. . . ."³⁸ In other words, the dream takes into account what may otherwise be overlooked. And in doing so it may guide or correct waking experience. Thus, Jung gives an example of a patient who had allowed "his neurosis to recede into the background," but whose dream "reminds him of it in a very disagreeable way and forces him to tell the truth."³⁹ The dreamer's experience in The Book of the Duchess seems compensatory in that sense of corrective.

For The Book of the Duchess then, an attempt has been made to advance description of dream verisimilitude in the poem, and beyond that to utilize modern psychological interests in pursuing the relationship of elements in the poem and the overall significance of the dream as consolation for the dreamer. I have not begun with modern dream theories and applied them to The Book of the Duchess,

nor have I attempted to contribute to clarification of modern dream studies. The effort has been rather to derive from the poem itself points for which modern dream studies can be used to provide sufficient explanation or guidance to help the reader stay in touch with what the poet has undertaken.

Some critics have felt that The Book of the Duchess lacks unity. For instance, Emile Legouis evidently believes that material leading to the dream section is not well integrated with it. "Le proème a du charme mais forme une histoire presque toute indépendante," he states.⁴⁰ One way of avoiding Legouis' dissatisfaction with the poem is to take seriously the presence of the dream as an experience belonging to the dreamer, prepared for by his conduct and somehow having an effect on his life. Pursuing that course, one finds coincidences of interest between Chaucer and modern dream psychologists which permit one to discuss something of the texture and some of the relationships among parts of the poem in a way which, hopefully, puts the reader in closer touch with the poem than he might otherwise be. That is one way, it seems to me, that advantage can be taken of modern dream psychology.

CHAPTER IV

THE HOUSE OF FAME

While, in comparison with The Book of the Duchess, The House of Fame has had little attention directed to its dream qualities, they seem for all that to be quite pervasive. As was noted previously, Chaucer calls self-reflective attention to the presence of a dream by having his dreamer pray for deliverance from "fantome and illusion." He reminds us again of the dream state by asserting that what the dreamer sees is more than a day dream; the castle he approaches "stood upon so hygh a roche,/ Hier stant ther non in Spayne"(1116-17).

The dream seems close to the "living and moving picture" type as described by Havelock Ellis.¹ "No man ever gazed at a dream picture which was at rest to his sleeping eye as are the pictures we gaze at with our waking eyes,"² says Ellis, and we are reminded especially perhaps of the scene in the temple of glass. The words of the literary text on the "table of bras"(142) become pictures or yield to pictures, and the pictures move and become mingled with sound as if the actuality of their scenes were present. Or we are reminded of the changing appearance of the rock on which the dreamer climbs toward the house of Fame. There are, of course, various sources of general movement. The dreamer roams in the temple of glass, he moves outside to the desert, he flies under the eagle's power to varying heights, he

"alther-fastest wente/ About"(2131-32) in the house of twigs. The house of twigs itself is seen revolving, tidings are flying out of its windows, a crowd inside is running and clambering. Petitioners rush about in the house of Fame.

Archetypal ingredients make another contribution to the dreamlike feeling of the poem. According to one of Jung's accounts of when to expect archetypal or collective images to appear in fantasies and dreams: "An infallible sign of collective images seems to be the appearance of the 'cosmic' elements, i.e., the images in the dream or fantasy are connected with cosmic qualities, such as temporal and spatial infinity, enormous speed and extension of movement, 'astrological' associations . . . changes in the proportion of the body, etc."³ The description seems especially relevant for this poem with its flight so high "That al the world, as to myn ye,/ No more semed than a prikke . . ."(906-7), its sight of "the ayerissh bestes"(965), its house of twigs revolving "as swyft as thought"(1924), and its unstable figure of Fame:

Me thoughte that she was so lyte
That the lengthe of a cubite
Was lengere than she semed be.
But thus sone, in a whyle, she
Hir tho so wonderliche streighte
That with hir fet she erthe reighte,
And with hir hed she touched hevne. . . .⁴
(1369-75)

The factors of journey, quest and flying also provide a basis of typical human experience for the action of the dream.

But perhaps the most important factor of dream verisimilitude in The House of Fame is that of unpremeditated experience. In recounting

his experience, the narrator seems to strive for the effect of a stream of experiences arising, as they often do in dreams, with apparent spontaneity. That effect is not maintained perfectly, but exceptions help to point up how prevalent the effect is. For instance, the narrator's account explains the actions of Fame before the dreamer experiences them; she is to grant some requests and turn down others arbitrarily (1538-49). In that case the spontaneity of the petitioning experience is reduced. Also the eagle forewarns the dreamer of the change of words into people to be expected in the house of Fame (1070-82). But for the most part, such preparation is missing, and events are allowed to present themselves unaccountably, so that the dreamlikeness is emphasized. At the beginning the dreamer does not know how he happens to be in the temple of glass; he must surmise that it belongs to Venus. Emerging from the temple, he is shocked to discover a desert. He calls for help and receives it, but in a form which astonishes him. Approaching the house of Fame he finds he must climb a mountain, a task which had not been mentioned by the eagle. He discovers names, sees musicians, and various illusion-makers, discovers poets bearing up the fame of various groups--all without anticipation.

That the narrator aims at reproducing unwilling experience seems clear from his use of the formula "was I war." He uses it first as he depicts the dreamer looking heavenward after praying to be saved from illusion:

Thoo was I war, lo! at the laste,
 That faste be the sonne, as hye
 As kenne myghte I with myn ye,
 Me thoughte I sawgh an egle sore. . . .
 (496-99)

Again in the house of Fame, after the dreamer hears songs celebrating Fame, he tells us:

Tho was I war, loo, atte laste,
 As I myne eyen gan up caste,
 That thys ylke noble quene
 On her shuldres gan sustene
 Bothe th'armes and the name
 Of thoo that hadde large fame. . . .
 (1407-12)

The dreamer is contemplating the house of twigs when he says:

. . . tho war was y
 How that myn egle, faste by,
 Was perched hye upon a stoon. . . .
 (1989-91)

In other ways as well he indicates striving for the spontaneous effect. Having arrived at a stopping point on his way to the house of Fame, he explains, "Y nyste how, but in a strete/ He sette me fair on my fete"(1049-50). While his attention is occupied by the sight of epic poets, the noise of petitioners begins or makes itself felt: "But while that y beheld thys syghte,/ I herde a noyse aprochen blyve"(1520-21). How the stranger arrives, we are not told; he is suddenly present:

With that y gan aboute wende,
 For oon that stood ryght at my bak,
 Me thoughte, goodly to me spak. . . .
 (1868-70)

Perhaps the mistaken information given by the eagle that the dreamer is to be rewarded by receiving tidings in the house of Fame can be understood as well as an unaccountable dream event.

From one point of view, The House of Fame is the drama of a poet struggling with a dream. The poet undergoes a dream which is troublesome to experience, difficult to recount and perplexing to interpret.⁵

In the other dream-vision poems, Chaucer shows himself capable of establishing a relationship between the narrator's life situation and the dream that he has. Thus in The Book of the Duchess, the narrator describes his waking despair, and the dream functions as a consolatory response. In both The Parliament of Fowls and The Prologue to the Legend of Good Women, some element of the dreamer's waking experience carries over into the dream, marking the dream function as responsive in some way. In The House of Fame, the dreamer's waking experience is not detailed. A hint of a feeling of confinement is provided by the narrator's reference to sleeping

As he that wery was forgo
On pilgrymage myles two
To the corseynt Leonard,
To make lythe of that was hard.⁶
(115-18)

But the burden of revealing the dreamer's condition is carried by the dream and its account.

It would seem that absence of detailed preparation emphasizes the revelatory function of this dream. It is to expose the mind of the dreamer. In that case, the function is not altogether unlike that which Curry assigns to it as a somnium coeleste and describes as the influences by celestial minds "upon the Imagination in accordance with their natures and in proportion to the aptitude or fitness

of our minds to receive them. . . ."7 But it needs to be noted that the celestial minds are themselves kept out of sight. The eagle, who purports to be Jove's messenger, speaks "In mannes vois"(556) and is characterized by human not divine qualities. At the same time, while the dreamer invokes higher aid in the cause of writing, he takes full responsibility for the dream; his own "Thought . . . wrot al that I mette"(523). In brief, the evidence in sight in the poem is that of the "aptitude and fitness" of the narrator's mind, not of celestial powers.

In view of the relative lack of guidance in preparations for the dream, of the general course of the dream experience (as it has been discussed in connection with contributions made by dream verisimilitude) and of frequent reference in the dream account to the narrator's reactions, perhaps the least strain is put upon interpretation by following in this instance Hall's concept of dream-images as a "projection of the mind"⁸ and his advice to "study dreams in order to find out what people are thinking about during sleep."⁹ One may thereby learn about the dreamer's conceptions about himself, his world, his problems and conflicts, Hall explains.¹⁰ For example, Hall says: "If a dreamer feels that the world is cold and bleak, he may materialize this conception by having the dream take place on a rocky coast in freezing weather. If he thinks that the world is full of turmoil and agitation, he will dream of thunderstorms, raging seas, battels, milling crowds and traffic jams."¹¹

The areas of concern which the dream discloses can in general be related to the narrator's role as poet. Robert J. Allen emphasizes the narrator's interest in "the nature of the material with which the literary artist deals," and points as well to his concern with the creative process.¹² For instance, Allen explains, the dreamer's encounter with the Troy story in the temple of glass is best understood as a creative one. He points out that "the formula, 'ther saugh I grave,' occurs again and again and constantly reminds us that our impressions come from an act of artistic reaction. . . ."¹³ He argues that it is easier to understand "the pictures, involved as they are with sound and movement, as imaginative reactions to a written text . . ." than to think of a story "emerging from a series of wall paintings."¹⁴ Donald C. Baker remarks, "Everywhere the reader turns in the poem he is met with an emphasis upon artifice, upon the artist. From the initial concern with the interpretation of dreams on through the Dido episode, the poet's trips with the Eagle to gather tidings for his use as a poet, 'Geoffrey's' maze of adventures in the House of Fame featuring the poets, entertainers, jugglers, historians, and singers, to his final, giddy experience in the whirling House of Rumor, the emphasis is everywhere upon the poet. . . ."¹⁵ And Baker tries to include the poem's heterogeneity of materials in that concern by suggesting that the theme is "the role of the artist as purveyor of Fame, as the historian, as the spreader of rumor, the role of the artist in his multifarious activities. . . ."¹⁶ As an introspective instrument, the dream

then can be said to allow the narrator to take stock of his poetic concerns.

But in addition to disclosing subjects of interest to the poet, the dream seems to project attitudes of the poet. Not everything is unpleasant for the dreamer. He enjoys wondering whether he is to be stellified (584-86); he is fascinated by contemplating the astrological scene and its relation to works he has read (985-90); he rushes about in the house of twigs "for to pleyen and for to lere"(2134). But all of these pleasures are broken off, the first two by opposition of the eagle, the last by a scene of agitation. Pervasively, the dreamer sees himself buffeted by profusion of impressions and disconcerted by deceptive qualities in his world of concerns.

The narrative emphasizes the projective value of the dream by continuous reminders of the dreamer's responses. A contrasting situation in The Parliament of Fowls may help clarify the point. There the dreamer observes the meeting of birds, but does not react to each event, and the dreamer awakes without giving a reaction to the whole event. In The House of Fame, little occurs that is not related to the dreamer's response to it.

The world which the dreamer discovers is one of troublesome abundance. In the temple of glass are "moo ymages . . . then I saugh ever"(121-27). The eagle tells him such a full list of "wonder thynges"(674) that he is to hear in the house of Fame that he finds it "impossible, to my wit"(702). "The grete soun"(1025)

that "rumbleth up and doun/ In Fames Hous, full of tydynge"(1026-27) makes him "for fere swete"(1042). Clemen is especially struck by the "wealth of impressions" in Book III and refers to the use of "long lists," citing lines 1187, 1217, 1260, 1301, 1960.¹⁷ Additionally, Clemen points out that "the idea of a vast number, of an almost overwhelming variety, is conveyed to us by the use of numerical comparisons to express an 'innumerable' profusion,"¹⁸ such as that the castle of Fame is "ful eke of wyndowes,/ As flakes falle in grete snowes"(1191-92), or that Fame "as feelee eyen hadde . . ./ As fetheres upon foules be"(1381-82).

The narrator is hard put to recount his experience. "Hyt were a long process to tell"(251) all about Dido and Aeneas, he explains; Dido's activities would be "too long to endyte"(381). He cannot describe all the coats of arms of those in the house of Fame,

For hyt to me were impossible;
Men myghte make of hem a bible
Twenty foot thykke, as y trowe.
(1333-35)

"What should I make lenger tale/ Of alle the pepil y ther say"(1282-83), he asks concerning the people outside the house of Fame. "Loo! how shulde I now telle al thys?"(1341) he asks upon entering the house. Clemen summarizes a number of such "protestations": "he assures us that he must not linger over something more than is necessary, that he must eschew lengthy or detailed descriptions, that he cannot do justice to the abundance of what he sees."¹⁹ The effect, as Clemen states, is to "strengthen the impression of overwhelming profusion and of amazement."²⁰ Considered as projection of thought, the dream opens

up the narrator's concept of his poetic world as overly crowded with impressions.

The dream also reveals the dreamer as sensitive to questions of truth and falsehood. The sensitivity ranges through issues of deceitful behaviour and false information. In reacting to the Dido story that he experienced as dreamer, the narrator recalls a number of stories. Concerning them, he emphasizes not "wikke Fame"(349), for instance, but falsehood of the lovers.²¹ And he remarks of these deceptions in general: "But wel-away! the harm, the routhe,/ That hath betyd for such untrouthe"(383-84). Finding himself in a desert without guidance, he cries to be saved "Fro fantome and illusion"(493). At the house of Fame, the dreamer finds outside a number of illusion-makers:

Magiciens, and tregetours,
And Phitonesses, charmeresses,
Olde wicches, sorceresses. . . .
(1260-63)

Inside are a number of epic poets associated with Calliope, but among them the dreamer discovers talk of deception; it is said that "Omer made lyes,/ Feynyng in hys poetries . . ."(1477-78). It is apparently in resentment of the fact that instances of fame are unreliable as indicators of the true state of merit of its recipients (since Fame reacts arbitrarily to virtues and failings alike) that the dreamer speaks out to the stranger in the house of Fame. He emphasizes that Fame does not know the truth of his own merits and therefore should not judge ("I wot myself best how y stonde"(1878), he asserts). In the house of twigs, the chief experience is that of mixing the false

with the true (a phenomenon about which he has been hearing from the eagle, 676, 1029). The dreamer watches false and true tidings pass together from the house of twigs: "Thus saugh I fals and soth compounded/ Together fle for oo tydyng"(2108-9).

Clemen evidently finds the issue of the true and false so strong that he speaks of a positive "longing" by the poet for truth, and suggests that in the house of twigs the poet "realizes to what an extent deceit and guile prevail even here."²² From the point of view of the dramatic action, there is little direct indication of such a longing. The narrator does not declare a longing for truth, nor a need for it, as preparation for the dream; in the house of twigs he does not lament the confounding of the true and false. Still, as an inference from the dreamer's sensitivities, Clemen's point is a reasonable one. In any case, the dream discloses that the narrator sees the world as heavily supplied with deception; he is concerned about the problem.

The topic of the true and false in Book II is a factor in the relationship between the dreamer and the eagle. The dreamer inclines to the wishful thought that he will be made a star, but the eagle corrects his opinion. After discoursing on sound, the eagle presumably means to challenge the efficacy of poetic presentations of proof. He asks:

"Have y not preved thus symply,
 Withoute any subtilite
 Of speche, or gret prolixite
 Of termes of philosophie,
 Of figures of poetrie,
 Or colours of rethorike?"
 (854-59)

Allan believes that the poet makes a decision in favor of poetic irresponsibility toward fact, and cites the encounter with the eagle as evidence. The Proem, he believes, establishes "an attitude of indifference to the world of scholarly speculation"²³ which is duplicated in the dreamer's reaction to the "eagle's astronomical lore."²⁴ But the dreamer's rejection of the eagle's discourse on the stars is preceded by a declaration which includes some interest in proof of experience. Recalling book treatments of "the hevenes region"(988), the dreamer thinks: "As fer as that y sey the preve;/ Therefore y kan hem now beleve"(989-90). In view of that declaration and the general evidence already considered of the narrator's sensitivity to falsehood, it does not seem possible to infer from the rejection of the eagle's speech a general rejection of truth as such. The point in the case of astrological lore seems to be a conflict between the dreamer's subjective experience and the eagle's theoretical and systematic approach.

Moreover, Allen's treatment suggests that the poet has made a choice which excludes the eagle's interests. But, while the narrator says in the Proem that he does not "thinke/ To besily my wyt to swinke"(15-16) over dream theories, his account (as Allen acknowledges) entails wide-ranging allusions to dream studies.²⁵ And in his lecture on sound, the eagle is unable to avoid the figures and colours that he would prefer to do without.²⁶ The contrasting positions include elements of each other. It is not necessary to suppose that the narrator identifies the eagle as an aspect of his

mind, though he does suggest this by explaining that when the dreamer awakens to the eagle's call, "with that vois, soth for to seyn,/ My mynde cam to me ageyn"(563-64). But, it does seem necessary to acknowledge that the eagle's mentality is, as a dream element, within the imaginative reach of the narrator. It would seem more appropriate then to regard the narrator as undergoing a conflict of tendencies within himself, than to suppose he has resolved the conflict in favor of one tendency.

What has been discovered then by attention to the dream is that it serves Chaucer as a way of showing what happens when a poet, at least the poet of this work on one occasion, gives himself over to an imaginative journey through his world of interests. Experience floods in upon him, too much to contend with, too full of deceptive appearances to be comfortable.

That is not to say the poem is sombre: much of it is comic; not only the encounter of a reluctant dreamer with a loquacious bird. The physical description of Fame is perhaps more strange than amusing, and her acts are disturbing. The incongruity of allowing that strange creature to be heard speaking, like a capricious woman given excessive power, is certainly satirical if not simply comic. The crowding together of the true and false tidings in the house of twigs is humorous. The very excess of experience is ironically amusing. Especially in so far as the reference to St. Leonard in introducing the dream indicates a desire for liberation from too narrow experience, the dream appears as a wish, or as a compensatory act, which runs out of control. The

Proem too establishes a comic tone in anticipating the general course of events. It shows the poet impressed by the profusion of conflicting, and consequently unreliable, theories of dreams, comically piling up the variety and expressing his inability to cope with it.

The Proem also provides the dreamer's final evaluation of his own dream. It introduces the dream as an event of the past (the narrator is to tell it "as I kan now remembre,"⁶⁴) and consequently includes it in the wish that "God turne us every drem to goode!"⁽¹⁾. The dreamer finds his own dream "wonderful"⁽⁶²⁾, but suggests no interpretation for it. That is, his general perplexity about what to make of dreams in general applies to this one also.

Comparing The House of Fame with works by French love poets, Clemen remarked: "The most significant difference is this . . . the French writers' overriding aim was to teach, to point a moral, whereas Chaucer did not wish to instruct but simply to give literary expression to what was in his mind, in an entertaining and amusing way."²⁷ This study has attempted to see the poet's disclosure of his mind as the drama of the narrator dealing with his dream.

CHAPTER V

THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS

In view of Chaucer's explicit instructions about the relation of the dream to the dreamer, as in lines 99-105, it is generally accepted that dream psychology of some sort is relevant for The Parliament of Fowls. Critics generally remark on the emergence of Affrican from the Somnium Scipionis and on the effect of the dreamer's preoccupied state of mind, and some call attention to the transformation of various elements from the book in the dream. Differences of opinion, in this case, are largely differences of the extent to which any one critic makes use of reference to dreams. But the differences should perhaps be greater, since there are some relatively undreamlike features of the work to consider, and since the kinds of interest Chaucer takes in dreams for purposes of this work should be distinguished.

Of the critics consulted, J. A. W. Bennett seems most sensitive to the possibilities of utilizing dream experience for this poem. For example, he takes archetypal ingredients into account in his treatment of the enclosed park to the extent that it represents one of the medieval instances of an earthly paradise. Such paradises reflect a general human need, he explains, and remarks: "They are such stuff as dreams are made of and this is a dream."¹ He finds it helpful to refer to dream behaviour to explain how the dream poem

carries out the principle of antithesis established in the opening lines, but shifts bases.² Concerning the resulting "ambiguities and imperfect correspondences," he concludes: "The most that the critic may do at this point is to remark on their appropriateness in a dream-poem. . . ."³ And he explains that "The dream embodies, whilst, as often happens in dreams, it also slightly alters, the contrast in the image of the twofold gate. . . ."⁴ Further, he asserts that "the inconsequential nature of a dream sufficiently accounts for" the disappearance of Affrican,⁵ adding, however, that the disappearance is appropriate for thematic and narrative reasons as well.⁶

With these instances from Bennett might be considered the image for indecision as the dreamer stands motionless "Right as, betwixen adamauntes two/ Of evene myght, a pece of yren set"(148-49). Freud discusses the "sensation of the inhibition of a movement" in dreams as representing a "conflict of will."⁷ The behaviour of the royal tercel can be singled out as an instance of displacement, since that fowl carries the principle burden of what becomes, in this setting, courtly pomposity. In general, the birds condense human and birdlike characteristics, which are alternatively played up (as when the royal tercel chooses his "soveryn lady"(416), and she answers with a blush (442-45), on the one hand, while some other members of the parliament break out with "Kek kek! quek quek!"(499), on the other).⁸ Dream condensation may also help to explain the appearance of the spring season on St. Valentine's Day.

But despite the utility of reference to dreams here and there in the poem, it is doubtful that dream verisimilitude is significant throughout. The narrator seems largely to disregard dream verisimilitude in the treatment of Cupid and the personified abstractions around the temple of Venus, for example; that is, he seems content to use them for their conventional significance and does not make it seem that the dreamer has encountered them as personalities. Similarly, there is a narrative point of view adopted for the description of the garden, which is not qualified to show that it represents the experience of this dreamer, as time references in lines 204-10 indicate. He tells us that there was "nevere . . . grevaunce of hot no cold," that "no man may there waxe sek ne old" and that "nevere wolde it nyghte," quite as if the setting were independent of the dreamer's experience of it. And while the sequence of scenes is bizarre enough, in keeping with the general nature of a dream "adventure," there is a sense that everything is in place and all movements are accounted for in a way that does not, perhaps, strongly evoke dream reality. For example, Cupid is situated "Under a tre, besyde a welle"(211); women dance around the temple of Venus; doves sit on it; the groups of birds involved in the parliament are assigned definite locations. The dreamer enters the temple of Venus where he hears sighs and sees Venus and others; he then emerges from the temple and once more in the place which was "so sote and grene"(296), he finds Nature. The point here is that, considered from the perspective of the manner of the account, we are not called upon to think of dreams. And when the

narrator breaks off his efforts to tell how many birds he found with Nature and exclaims, "But to the poynt"(372), we can be sure he is asserting narrative and thematic prerogatives over considerations of what is dreamlike.

More significant than the contribution that dream qualities may make to poetic texture is the usefulness of the dream as a way to extend and alter awareness. It is here that Chaucer puts major emphasis. And while almost every critic says something about the relationship between the dreamer's mind and his dream in The Parliament of Fowls, some minimize the matter unduly. Huppé and Robertson make too little of the narrator's preparations for the dream.⁹ Robert Worth Frank, Jr. chooses too narrow a base for linking The Dream of Scipio with the poet's dream.¹⁰ Since the poet took the trouble of inserting five stanzas between the Scipio vision and the scene with Affrican at the gate in his own dream, the matter should be examined with more care.

A clue from studies of hypnagogic imagery may be of aid here. Silberer explains that in a condition combining drowsiness with an effort to think, he underwent something which can be described as "an hallucinatory experience which puts forth 'automatically,' as it were, an adequate symbol for what is thought (or felt) at a given instant."¹¹ That is to say, a perceptual experience replaces abstract thinking. While the poet speaks of sleep, not drowsiness in this instance, the quality of experience seems quite similar to that which Silberer describes.

the circumstances quickly become complex, as the whole moves on to its stage as dream "adventure." But at the outset, at least, we see the dreamer struggling with a thought and coming up with an image which replaces it, much as Silberer describes, in this case, a wish-tinged image for some such thought as this: "if only the Dream of Scipio would lend its authority to my earthly purposes."

Critics often see the dream as an attempt to solve a problem. Huppé and Robertson believe the dreamer's task is, in effect, to pit the perspective of the Dream of Scipio against love in this world to reveal the shortcomings of the latter.¹⁴ For Brewer, the dreamer's task is, on the contrary, to come to an understanding of love in this world which will correct the onesidedness of the view in the Dream of Scipio.¹⁵ But the possibility suggested by the opening of the dream should be called to attention for the course of the dream as well: that is, that the dreamer tries to solve his problem by finding in "the realms of love"¹⁶ the virtues which Affrican describes, not as a supplement but as a substitute.

The three major elements from the Dream of Scipio which provide "recurring motifs"¹⁷ for the narrator's dream are the concepts of common profit, the blissful place and harmony. While working for common profit is a duty which Affrican explains is supposed to be performed on earth (46-47 and 74-75), whether the dreamer finds it an effective attribute of his realm is at least dubious. If anyone in the dream works for common profit, it is, of course, under the aegis of Nature, not of the Venus of the temple. But the eagles work

against the common need of the fowls, as the complaint about their interminable speeches indicates: "Have don, and lat us wende!"(492). And the lower birds come to such jangling and wrangling that it is hard to identify them as champions of common profit either.

The blissful place and harmony are not originally attributed to the earth at all. After a life of working for common profit, a man "shulde into a blysfyl place wende,/ There as joye is that last withouten ende"(48-49). The dreamer tries to match it in his earthly paradise:

Yit was there joye more a thousandfold
 Than man can telle; ne nevere wolde it nyghte,
 But ay cler day to any manes syghte.
 (208-10)

But once past that initial impression, the dreamer finds Cupid and a mixed company ("Plesaunce" and "Curteysie," but also "Craft" and "Foolhardynesse") somewhat out of keeping with the pleasant and serene setting. And upon leaving the dark, tormented scene in the temple of Venus (which also lies within the original seemingly blissful park), the dreamer feels in need of "solace"(297). Then, though he returns to the place "That I of spak, that was so sote and green"(296), the blissfulness of the scene is largely dispelled by the activity among the birds. The closely related theme of harmony is treated similarly. What the Dream of Scipio describes is "melodye . . ./ That cometh of thilke speres thryes thre . . ."(60-61). The dream attempts to match it:

Of instruments of strenges in acord
 Herde I so pleye a ravysyng swetnesse,
 That God, that makere is of al and lord,
 New herde nevere beter, as I gesse.
 (197-200)

Soon the sound heard is "a swogh that gan about renne,/ Whiche sikes were engendered with desyr"(247-48), not like the original sweet harmony. And later the dreamer hears simply "noyse" of birds (492).¹⁸

It seems likely enough that Chaucer made use of the dream as a way of turning over a problem, and possibly as a way of dividing the allegiance of the dreamer. A dream permits one to add a view to one's waking considerations. The issue arises, at least, as soon as we ask what final outcome the dream had. Does love stand condemned under the pressure of moral and eternal considerations? Opinions vary widely.

Huppe and Robertson assert that the "lesson" of the poem is: "the vanity of the world and of the lovers of the world,"¹⁹ Bennett believes the narrator has learned "some inkling of the place of love in the scheme of things."²⁰ It is not vain, but it is limited: ". . . for all the values that inhere in love, the world of lovers is not the whole world; love is but a 'function' of Nature."²¹ Baker finds that the dream ends in a way which "declares love is basically good."²² For Baker's reading, that means as well that the poet of love has been achieved the justification he sought--"the justification of love, and consequently, of . . . the love poet."²³ But Baker treats the dream as a wish fulfilment which the poet does not accept: "But this is a dream. And the Poet must awaken to reality, and with reality returns the disturbing concern for a problem that has not been fully solved by Cytherea's dream."²⁴ Robert O. Payne asserts that the poet does not know what to think about love: "Although his guide at the

beginning of the dream had promised him he would learn things about love which would enable him to write better poetry, Chaucer the dreamer is no more able than we readers or the birds to reconcile or make categorical sense out of the clutter of disparate perspectives the vision offers him."²⁵

These differences of opinion reflect at least partially different tendencies within the poem itself and depend, in large part, upon what evaluation the narrator himself makes. If we look back to the beginning, we find that the narrator speaks of love as a great, albeit both gracious and cruel, lord. Even those critical opinions which find that the poet honors love do not claim that the dream justifies regarding love as altogether exalted, and nothing in the dream would seem to sustain the narrator's view. Faced at the outset with a perspective (the "sterry place," 43) which makes the earth and its concerns "lytel"(57), meeting in his dream a temple of Venus which leaves him wishing for solace, finding the representatives of the courtly outlook (for whom love is a great lord), thwarted in finding a mate while the lower birds enjoy love without lending it any dignity, it is scarcely plausible that the narrator would end with the same view he announces at the beginning. If he had hoped to retain his high opinion of matters of love, he must have been disappointed, and we can understand why the dream ends with "shouting" (693) which presumably is noisy, not sweetly harmonious. But if the attitude announced in the opening lines was, in fact, excessively admiring and in need of correction, then the dream has a healthy

effect by means of belittling love. But, belittling in this case need not mean ridiculing love nor finding it altogether vain. It may mean, as Bennett suggests, simply determining its place. In that case, the role of the roundel, otherwise incongruous, is justified:

Now welcome, somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres wedres overshake,
And driven away the longe nyghtes blake!

Saynt Valentyn, that art ful hy on-lofte,
Thus syngen smale foules for they sake:
Now welcome, somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres wedres overshake.

Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,
Sith ech of hem recovered hath hys make,
Ful blissful mowe they syng when they wake:
Now welcome, somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres wedres overshake,
And driven away the longe nyghtes blake!

The roundel announces that there is something joyous and harmonious about the mere fact that the birds have mates as Nature wished, even though the birds in question are simple and rowdy and selfish.

The evidence on each side would seem to be strong and in need of reconciliation. It would seem to be reconciled if we regard the dream as a corrective one, but assume that the narrator is not willing to admit that it is. The narrator stubbornly clings to his admiration of love as lord. The attitude announced at the beginning (and generally assumed to represent only the narrator's initial attitude) stands as well for the poet's view at the end. Both the reading of the Dream of Scipio and the narrator's dream are recalled from a point in the past with respect to the opinion comments. But the book and dream have not

served that view. Hence the narrator concludes grumblingly:

I wok, and othere bokes tok me to,
 To reede upon, and yit I rede alwey.
 I hope, ywis, to rede so som day
 That I shal mete som thyng for to fare
 The bet, and thus to rede I nyl nat spare.
 (695-99)

He is hoping that the next book will suit his views a bit better, or lead to an experience which does.

In the case of The Parliament of Fowls, modern dream psychology helps investigate dream verisimilitude, but also provides suggestions for considering the transition from waking to dreaming experience and the significance the dream holds for the dreamer. An attempt has been made to follow Chaucer's handling of the dream as problem-solving, and to see the complexity of attitude which the dream permits the dreamer to adopt.

CHAPTER VI

THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN

As is the case for each of the dream-vision poems, a question arises in connection with the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women concerning the relationship of preliminary material to the ensuing dream. Payne remarks that "it is customary to regard the two parts as rather loosely connected. . . ." ¹ He finds, however, that the parts can be considered "as two closely correlated treatments, the first discursive, the second figurative and symbolic, of a common primary theme, the art of poetry." ² For that view, the relationship of books to experience (of the daisy) is the most important feature of the preliminary material; first experience takes the poet away from his books, but then his desire to praise the daisy "drives him back to his books again, seeking adequate means to praise it artfully." ³ Within the dream section, "the charge on which Chaucer is haled into court by the God of Love . . . is that his poetry isn't all it should be; the argument of his case produces a critical bibliography of his work to date; and his sentence, finally, is to compose another, better poem." ⁴ Payne's interpretation may be considered complementary to the more usual critical interest in the theme of love. D. D. Griffith shows how the Legend of Good Women as a whole "has for its organizing motif the presentation of good women who were martyrs to love because of devotion to a definitely conceived religion. . . ." ⁵

While the G version of the Prologue avoids, as Griffith shows in detail, "the most noticeable analogies to Christian worship,"⁶ there is emphasis on the religion with "its god, its mediator and intercessor (Alceste), its saints, its legends, its martyrs, its relic, and its shrine, with a system of repentance, penance and satisfaction."⁷

Dream psychology is relevant to both approaches, since both necessarily utilize the most notable instance of dream activity, the transformation of the daisy into Alceste. But there are additional details of linkage between the preliminary material and the dream section as well as questions of the dreamer's attitude which may helpfully be considered from the perspective of dream psychology.

While his specific findings must be reviewed critically, Frederic Tupper, in an article early in the century, proposed that modern dream psychology would be useful in following the course of the Prologue.⁸ His chief point of interest is in how elements of the poet's waking experience reappear in the dream. "The poet's imaginative use of the daily interest as the psychic source of his dream is in close accord with truth," Tupper asserts, thinking evidently of Freud's concept of the day's residue.⁹

In both F and G versions, the poet spends the day in the meadow, beholding the daisy, then finds in his dream:

. . . a quene
Clothed in real habyt al of grene.
A fret of goold she hadde next hyre her
And upon that a whit corone she ber
With many floures, and I shal nat lye;

For al the world, ryght as the dayesye
 Ycorouned is with white leves lite,
 Swiche were the floures of hire coroune white.
 For of o perle fyn and oryental
 Hyre white coroun was ymaked al;
 For which the white coroun above the grene
 Made hire lyk a dayesye for to sene,
 Considered ek the fret of gold above.¹⁰
 (G, 145-57)

Feminine attributes of the daisy of the field facilitate the transformation; both F and G versions refer, in roughly equivalent language to the daisy as "fulfyld of vertu and of alle honour"(G, 56).¹¹ Relying on the F version, Tupper traces the relationship of the daisy with the sun.

The May-day rover sees "this flour agein the sonne sprede" early in the morning (48-49) and watches it go to rest at sunset (60-63), for
 "Hir chere is pleylnly sprad in the brightnesse
 Of the sonne, for ther it wol uncloze."
 Again he tells us that he is "at the resurrection of the flower, when it should uncloze against the sun that rose as red as rose"(F, 110-12). Now watch the vivid transformation of this natural phenomenon and of the emotions it provokes into picturesque dream-content. The daisy-lady of the vision enters, we are told twice (F, 213, 241), in the hand of the god of Love, who is thus portrayed, (F, 130f):
 "His gilte heer was coroned with a sonne
 Instede of golde for hevynesse and wyghte;
 Therwith me thoght his face shon so brighte
 That wel unnethes myght I him beholde," etc.¹²

The day in the field provides other connectives as well. The daisy reappears physically apart from Alceste, though the daisy is praised as Alceste by a company of ladies faithful to love (as "our alder pris in figurynge" F, 298). Tupper notes that reference to the "tydif" in F, 154-63 foreshadows the reception of the dreamer by the God of Love and the intercession by Alceste. Again in F, the poet kneels during the day by the daisy and is found in his dream kneeling

by the flower (308). Somatic stimuli should also be considered, as Tupper notes.¹³ In both versions, the poet falls asleep in an arbor with flowers strewn upon his couch (G, 97-101).

Other relationships which Tupper recounts do not fall within the same pattern. Tupper considers the poem's opening reference to heaven and hell (3-6) an anticipation of the "self-sacrifice of Alceste who went to hell for her lord"(300).¹⁴ But while it may be said to anticipate, it does not necessarily represent, as Tupper assumes, one of the thoughts of the day. While it is reasonable to suppose that the poet's discussion of his customary response to the season (F, 36-95 and G, 36-60) mingles with the events of the day of the dream itself, the same cannot be said for material relating to books, to other poets and to the purpose for the poet's discussion of books. The poet marks off the dream-day from his general considerations, specifying that it occurred some time in the past:

Whan passed was almost the month of May,
And I hadde romed, al the someres day,
The grene medewe, of which that I yow tolde. . . .
(G, 89-91)

Further, as G makes certain, the poet knew the course of the dream before his actual account of it:

But wherfore that I spak, to yeve credence
To bokes olde and don hem reverence,
Is for men shulde autoritees beleve,
There as there lyth non other assay by preve.
For myn entent is, or I fro yow fare,
The naked text in English to declare
Of many a story, or elles of many a geste,
As autours seyn; leveth hem if yow leste!
(G, 81-88)

by the House (1901) - Committee on Education and Labor
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 with almost equal force, and the House of Representatives.

What is the result of the House of Representatives?

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We may then view other points of contact as consequences of the dream. That is, the poet speaks of heaven and hell, at least in part, because he has dreamed above Alceste:

"She that for hire husbonde ches to dye,
 And ek to gon to helle rather than he,

 And broughte hyre out of helle ageyn to blys?"
 (G, 501-4)

Indeed, the general course of the poet's preliminary considerations can be said to be aroused by his dream experience. The God of Love has berated the poet for relying on the wrong books in translating The Romance of the Rose and in writing Troilus and Criseyde. Concerning the latter, the God of Love challenges:

"Was there no good matere in thy mynde,
 Ne in alle thy bokes me couldest thow nat fynde
 Som story of wemen that were goode and trewe?"
 (G, 270-72)

He reminds the poet:

"Yis, God wot, sixty bokes olde and newe
 Hast thow thyself, alle ful of storyes grete,
 That bothe Romainys and ek Grekes trete
 Of sundry wemen, which lyf that they ladde,
 And evere an hundred goode ageyn oon badde."
 (G, 273-77)

And he uses a grain metaphor to point the poet to his duty:

"But yit, I seye, what eyleth the to wryte
 The draf of storyes, and forgete the corn?"
 (G, 311-12)

That leaves the waking poet to consider not merely the value of books in general, but also the selection of the proper stories from books:

Thanne mote we to bokes that we fynde,
 Thourgh whiche that olde thynges ben in mynde,
 And to the doctryne of these olde wyse
 Yeven credence, in every skylful wyse,

And trowen on these olde aproved storyes
 Of holynesse, of regnes, of victoryes,
 Of love, of hate, of othere sondry thynges,
 Of which I may nat make rehersynges.

(G, 17-24)

Later he recalls the God of Love's metaphor in apologizing for his meagre abilities in relation to other poets:

For wel I wot that folk han here-beforn
 Of makyng ropen, and lad away the corn.

(G, 61-62)

Concerning the dream psychology within the vision, Tupper notes the pictorializing which is common to dreams, citing the entrance of the God of Love and the lady.¹⁵ Also the poet's handling of the dreamer's initial encounter with the God of Love carries a bizarre, dreamlike immediacy. The dreamer, who can see, is unable to look upon the face of the God of Love because of its unnatural brightness:

But of his face I can not seyn the hewe;
 For sikerly his face shon so bryghte
 That with the glem astoned was the syghte;
 A furlong-vey I myhte hym not beholde.

(G, 162-65)

At the same time, the dreamer feels that the God of Love, who is blind, is looking at him:

An al be that men seyn that blynd is he,
 Algate me thoughte he myghte wel yse;
 For sternely on me he gan beholde,
 So that his lokynge doth myn herte colde.

(G, 169-72)

A final area of interest from the perspective of dream psychology is that of the relationship of the dreamer's encounter with Alceste and the God of Love and the outcome of the dream. The question of the

poet's attitude toward his materials was raised early in the century by Harold C. Goddard who found it satiric.¹⁶ Although his position was strongly rejected by Lowes,¹⁷ points of difficulty remain. On the apparent awkwardness of the dreamer's failure to recognize Alceste, although she is named (for instance, F, 432 and G, 422), Tupper comments: "Nothing could be truer to the dream-life than such a lack of recognition."¹⁸ It is doubtful that a mere claim of dream verisimilitude is in itself adequate for apparent problems in a text; since anything can happen in a dream, the claim would explain too much. Still, varying degrees of illogicality and strangeness occur in dreams, and Chaucer may have felt that a dream setting provided appropriate ground for complicating the poet's experience. Especially in the light of the differences (traced by Griffith), in G as compared to F, strange elements do stand out.

In view of Chaucer's usual practice in the dream-visions, it is psychologically striking that the poet falls asleep untroubled in the Prologue. There are quite marked problems for the dreamers in The Book of the Duchess and The Parliament of Fowls. The House of Fame only hints at a problem, without establishing one, but it lacks as well the positive features of the dreamer's situation indicated in the Prologue. The poet has spent a delightful day in the field and he falls asleep in a flower-filled bed. His dream opens in the G version with an ideal landscape. The dreamer stresses its promising nature:

Forgeten hadde the erthe his pore estat
 Of wynter, that hym naked made and mat,
 And with his swerd of cold so sore hadde greved.
 Now hadde th' atempre sonne al that releved,
 And clothed hym in grene al newe ageyn.
 (G, 113-17)

Since the poem ends with the dreamer working on a new poetic task, there seems to be a motif of renewal, of seasonal and of poetic powers, at work. But the course of discussion with Alceste and the God of Love reduces the positiveness of that motif.

As Paull F. Baum points out, the accusation made by the God of Love against the dreamer is of questionable merit:

Since the extant MS of RR is not certainly Chaucer's we must suppose for the sake of the argument that he did at least translate parts of the Roman which were unfavorable to women. The Troilus is more difficult to account for, since obviously Chaucer could sustain his contention that the story of Criseyde and her unhappy end was a warning to unfaithful women, and a fortiori he could insist that Troilus was a paragon of fidelity, a notable honor in the worship of Love.¹⁹

But it is not necessary to consider other poems to discover something strange in the encounter. The task assigned, as Baum points out, contains what appears to be a contradiction. The poet is told to "Speke wel of love"(480), but Alceste specifies that he is to write tales which show women true in love and men false:

"Now wol I seyn what penaunce thow shalt do
 For thy trespas, and understond it here:
 Thow shalt, whil that thow livest, yer by yere,
 The moste partye of thy tyme spende
 In makynge of a glorious legende
 Of goode women, maydenes and wyves,
 That were trewe in lovyng al here lyves;
 And telle of false men that hem betrayen,
 That al here lyf ne don nat but assayen

How manye wemen they may don a shame;
 For in youre world that is now holden game."²⁰
 (G, 469-79)

Beyond that we may note the refusal of Alceste to listen to the dreamer for whom she is interceding, and the arbitrariness she attributes to the God of Love in doing so:

And she answerde, "Lat be thyn arguynge,
 For Love ne wol nat counterpletyd be
 In ryght ne wrong; and lerne this at me!"
 (G, 465-67)

Alceste's own "defence" of the poet does suggest that the God of Love may be misinformed ("Al ne is nat gospel that is to you pleynded;/ The god of Love hereth many a tale yfeyned," G, 326-27), but she does not clearly deny that the poetry the God of Love names is harmful. To excuse the dreamer of malice, she is willing to substitute dulness or obsequiousness:

"Or elles, sire, for that this man is nyce,
 He may translate a thyng in no malyce,
 But for he useth bokes for to make,
 And taketh non hed of what matere he take,
 Therefore he wrot the Rose and ek Crisseyde
 Of innocence, and nyste what he seyde.
 Or hym was boden make thilke tweye
 Of som persone, and durste it not withseye;
 For he hath write many a bok er this."
 (G, 340-48)

During the course of her plea, she indicates that the dreamer is too insignificant to merit a severe sentence. The God of Love already has likened the dreamer to a worm, saying "For it were better worthi, trewely,/ A worm to comen in my syght than thow"(G, 243-44). Alceste suggests the dreamer is no more than a fly to the God of Love's lion:

"For lo, the gentyl kynde of the lyoun!
 For whan a flye offendeth hym or byteth,
 He with his tayl away the flye smyteth
 Al esyly. . . ."

(G, 377-80)

The God of Love and Alceste need not lose stature in exercising arbitrary power and in largely ignoring the dreamer's own case. Still the course of events seems to indicate that Chaucer is exercising a mild, ironic resistance in relationship to Love and to the task assigned.

In comparison with The Book of the Duchess and The Parliament of Fowls, Chaucer provides little guidance as to how the dream represents the thinking of the dreamer. But the dreamer's personality is depicted in the dream and a problem is thrust upon his awareness by it. We are justified then, perhaps, in regarding the dream as a projection in Hall's sense. As psychological experience, the dream has disquieting elements. As a reflection of the poet's mind, the dream reveals a dubious reconciliation to Love. Retiring in a happy frame of mind, having spent the day admiring the beloved daisy, the dreamer finds his poetry attacked and his character degraded and is assigned an ambiguous task.

For the Prologue, then, dream psychology is of some aid in clarifying details of unity and the general structural patterning of the poem. Viewing the dream as an activity by the dreamer helps describe the ironic complexities of the experience.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made to increase our understanding of Chaucer's use of dream materials by relating modern dream psychology to his works. That effort has not necessitated the claim that Chaucer anticipated modern findings, nor that Chaucer's thinking belongs to a school of psychological interest. The point has been rather that in manipulating dream references and dream sections in his poems, Chaucer has revealed interests and uses which can be clarified by attention to questions that modern dream psychology asks and by descriptions of actual dream behaviour that modern psychology provides. Attention to dream semantics has permitted a survey of Chaucer's manipulations of dream references and materials. For the dream-visions, in so far as it has been relevant, modern dream psychology has been utilized as a means of following the impulses of Chaucer's poetry, and in that way as a further means of bringing the reader into contact with the work. While there is some critical reluctance to refer to modern dream psychology at all in connection with Chaucer's work, many critics assent to the basic principle that Chaucer's artistic constructions are related to actual dream experience in some way. This study has attempted to increase the attention critics have given to points of dream verisimilitude and to dream interaction with the waking events of the poem. It has emphasized as well the psychologically

describable function of the dream sections of the dream-vision poems, that is, their roles in the total process of the dreamer's thinking.

The basic finding of the study can be expressed quite simply: for Chaucer, the dream is not a self-contained unit which is added arbitrarily to other units in the poems; it is rather an element in the mental dynamics of the dreamer, springing from and colored by the dreamer's personality and reacted to by him.

FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

¹The Legend of Dido, The Legend of Hypermnestra.

²The Knight's Tale, The Miller's Tale, Sir Thopas, The Man of Law's Tale, The Wife of Bath's Prologue, The Squire's Tale, The Monk's Tale, The Nun's Priest's Tale.

³Kittredge, Chaucer and his Poetry (Cambridge, Mass.: Harcourt University Press, 1946), especially 68-70; Lowes, Geoffrey Chaucer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 98, 118; Curry, Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences, revised (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1960), chapter VIII.

⁴Sigmund Freud in a statement in 1931 for an edition of The Interpretation of Dreams said of that work: "It contains, even according to my present-day judgment, the most valuable of all the discoveries it has been my good fortune to make"(XXXII). Freud, The Complete Psychological Works, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955-64).

⁵See reviews in Progress in Clinical Psychology, Calvin Hall, "Current Trends in Research on Dreams," II (1960), 239-57; Jerome L. Singer, "Recent Research on Dreams and Daydreams," V (1963), 88-111; and Ralph H. Gundlach, "Dreams: Their Meaning for Therapy and Mental Organization," V (1963), 112-36.

⁶For example, Robert Worth Frank, Jr., "Structure and Meaning in The Parlement of Foules," PMLA, LXXI (1956), 534, in a reaction not peculiar to him, is content to let lines 99 ff. of The Parlement of Foules describe "the particular psychology which Chaucer appeals to. . . ." He does not ask whether that psychology is reasonable nor whether it resembles ideas modern students of the dream have. Kittredge himself cited no dream studies, relying evidently on generalizations from his own experience. Gardiner Stillwell, "Unity and Comedy in Chaucer's Parlement of Foules," JEGP, 49 (1950), 480, asserts that "dreams are merely suggested by the activities of the waking mind; they are not transcripts of daytime experience." He does not, however, cite in support examples of theoretical considerations from outside Chaucer.

⁷One instance of a negative judgment about the importance of dream studies for Chaucer, given without amplification, comes from Robert Kilburn Root as he considers The House of Fame: "With what amused interest he (Chaucer) would have investigated present-day methods of 'psychoanalysis' through the interpretation of dreams!" Root, The Poetry of Chaucer. Rev. ed. (New York: Smith, 1950), 130. See also the comment by R. E. Kaske cited below.

⁸Frederick Tupper, "Chaucer's Lady of the Daisies," JEGP, 21 (1922), 293-317.

⁹Freud, Complete Works, XII, 180-203.

¹⁰Freud, Complete Works, XII, 181.

¹¹Cicero, De Senectute, De Amicitia, De Divinatione, trans. W. A. Falconer (London: Heinemann, 1930), 271.

¹²For the reference, I am indebted to Ludwig Binswanger's mention of it in his essay "Dream and Existence" in Ludwig Binswanger, Being-in-the World: Selected Papers, trans. and with a critical introduction to his existential psychoanalysis by Jacob Needleman (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 222-48. Binswanger quotes the same passage when he finds himself saying, about some examples he is considering: "These dreams, to be sure, are artistic creations," (236). He adds: "But with the insight we have gained from psychoanalysis, we can follow the famous example of Cicero . . ." (*ibid.*).

¹³Macrobius, Commentary on the Dream of Scipio, trans. with an introduction by William Harris Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 13.

¹⁴Macrobius, Commentary, Chapter III, 87-92.

¹⁵Bronson, In Search of Chaucer (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1960), 35.

¹⁶*ibid.*

¹⁷*ibid.*

¹⁸*ibid.*

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Page 7.

¹⁹Prelogical Experience: An Inquiry into Dreams and Other Creative Processes (New York: Basic Books, 1959).

²⁰Jung, Collected Works, trans. R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953-64), vol. 8, 294-5.

²¹Fromm, The Forgotten Language: An Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales and Myths (New York: Grove Press, 1957).

²²Kaske, "Chaucer and Medieval Allegory," ELH, 30 (1963), 186. Citing several references to psychology in Robertson's book, Kaske comments: "If the 'psychology' referred to is specifically modern psychology, its historical irrelevance seems too obvious for comment." On the other hand, he does defend the place of psychological interest in medieval literature: ". . . one doubts that late medieval authors and their audience would have divested morally significant action of the psychological dimensions established by Cassian, Augustine, and Gregory, and developed by later writings" (*ibid.*).

²³Everett, "Chaucer's Love Visions, with Particular Reference to The Parlement of Foules," in Essays on Middle English Literature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 98.

²⁴*ibid.*

²⁵Robertson, A Preface to Chaucer (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962), 276-7.

²⁶Zilboorg, A History of Medical Psychology (New York: W. W. Norton, 1941), 31-2.

²⁷Freud, Complete Works, IV, 261.

²⁸Jung, Collected Works, vol. 12, 333, for the assumption that "alchemy deals with the same, or very similar, processes as those involved in active imagination and dreams, i.e., ultimately with the process of individuation." But see also sections II and III in "The Psychic Nature of the Alchemical Work" for discussion of the question of conscious awareness of the investigators.

²⁹Jung, Collected Works, vol. 8, 291.

³⁰Brett, A History of Psychology (London: Allen, 1912-21), vol. 2, 130.

³¹Cohen, "Chaucer's Prioress and Her Tale: A Study of Anal Character and Anti-Semitism," The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 31 (1962), 232-49. Whether Cohen's reading is a good one or not is not in question here; it is only noteworthy that he believes a reading which brings together Chaucer and Freud is possible.

³²McCurdy, "The History of Dream Theory," The Psychological Review, 53 (1946), 225.

³³Among instances which are readily seen to be relevant are some ideas in "Yoga Dream Doctrine," examined by Babu Shivbarart Lal Warman, 91-93; the assertion in "Discourse on Good and Bad Dreams," 125-8, from the Babylonian Talmud that "A man is only shown (in a dream what emanates) from the thoughts of his heart," 127; and a comment by Synesius of Cyrene in "Dreams Take the Soul to 'The Superior Region'," 134-7: "The charming promises of hope so dear to man, the farseeing calculations of fear, all come to us through dreams," 136, in Woods, The World of Dreams: An Anthology (New York: Random House, 1947).

³⁴Kleitmann, Sleep and Wakefulness (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 92.

³⁵ibid.

³⁶ibid.

³⁷Fromm, Forgotten Language, 136.

³⁸Curry, Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences, 195.

³⁹Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity (New York: Noonday Press, 1955), 276.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹Bronson, In Search, 35.

²Bronson, In Search, 43.

³William C. Dement, "Essay on Dreams," in New Directions in Psychology II (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965), 225, noting that in a dream we may be unaffected by events which would astonish us in waking life, remarks: "This seems to imply that, although the conscious quality of the dream experience is an intense sense of reality, at some other level of awareness we know that we are dreaming." He quotes Freud as reaching a similar conclusion at one point. Aristotle thinks similarly. "Sometimes, too, opinion says (to dreamers) just as to those who are awake, that the object seen is an illusion; at other times it is inhibited, and becomes a mere follower of the phantasm." De Somniis, 458b, in Aristotle, Works, trans. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931). Whether Chaucer believed so as well, I do not know, though he does at least come close to providing a dreamer with that awareness. In The House of Fame the dreamer, during the course of his dream, asks to be delivered from "fantome and illusion." In any case, dual awareness is appropriate for the reader of the dream-vision poem. That is, the reader should lend himself to the sense of reality, but still be cognizant of the illusory qualities.

⁴Dement, "Essay on Dreams," 138.

⁵Dement, "Essay on Dreams," 210.

⁶Dement, "Essay on Dreams," 202.

⁷Curry, Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences, 206. Dement does not speak of the "imagination," but he does wonder whether the sensory stimuli posited dictate differentiation and organization, or whether the mind imposes significant patterns: "It is possible that at its point of origin, the hypothesized internal sensory input is relatively nonspecific. Accordingly, the content of the perception is 'created' by the cerebral cortex as it attempts to analyze this nonspecific input." (Dement, "Essay on Dreams," 222.)

⁸Foulkes, "Theories of Dream Formation and Recent Studies of Sleep Consciousness," Psychological Bulletin, 62 (1964), 241.

⁹Dement, "Essay on Dreams," 188.

¹⁰Dement, "Essay on Dreams," 189-190.

¹¹Dement, "Essay on Dreams," 213.

¹²The full report is reprinted in Appendix to this study.

¹³De La Mare, Behold, This Dreamer, (New York: Knopf, 1939), 101.

¹⁴Malcolm, Dreaming (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), 55. For Malcolm the idea that dreaming is "an inward state or process" causes "insoluble problems" (54).

¹⁵Dement disposes of the idea that at least the dream reports obtained in the experimental work he refers to are merely stories without reference to what actually occurs intra-psychically. Dream accounts have been matched with records of direction of eye movement in such a way that Dement can declare: "It would border on the ridiculous to argue that a complicated series of eye movements is executed with no experiential component whatsoever, and then, in the instance of arousal, a dream is composed which exactly corresponds to those previously executed eye movements. The only reasonable interpretation is that the dream images are appearing smoothly and progressively during sleep and the dreamer is looking at them." ("Essay on Dreams," 173.)

¹⁶Erikson, "The Dream Specimen and Psychoanalysis," American Psychoanalytic Association Journal, 2 (1954), 18.

¹⁷Freud, Complete Works, V, 542-43.

¹⁸Freud, Complete Works, V, 514.

¹⁹All Chaucer references are made to The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F. N. Robinson, 2nd. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961).

²⁰R. C. Goffin, "Heaven and Earth in The Parlement of Foules," Modern Language Review, 31 (1936), 495, thinks "that Chaucer did look to the Somnium for 'literary material'."

Donald C. Baker, "The Poet of Love and The Parlement of Fowles," University of Mississippi Studies in English, 2 (1961), 85, states that the dreamer "is looking for his solution, a way to 'fare the bet' as a Poet."

²¹Goffin, "Quiting by Tidings in the Hous of Fame," Medium Aevum, 12 (1943), 42: "Here, as in the Legend, the 'quiting' takes the form of the provision of new poetic material."

²²Freud, "Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis," Complete Works, XV, 90.

²³ibid.

²⁴Fromm, Forgotten Language, 25.

²⁵Fromm, Forgotten Language, 33.

²⁶The possibility that the report is false does not, of course, change the fact that such experience is expected to resemble dream experience.

²⁷Foulkes, "Theories of Dream Formation," 241.

²⁸As it continues the quotation introduces the additional issue of wish fulfilment:

The syke met he drynketh of the tonne;
The love-re met he hath his lady wonne.
(104-5)

²⁹Silberer, "Report on a Method of Eliciting and Observing Certain Symbolic Hallucination Phenomena," in Organization and Pathology of Thought, trans. David Rapaport (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), 197.

³⁰Kleitmann, Sleep and Wakefulness, 80.

³¹Freud, Complete Works, XV, 372.

³²Freud, Complete Works, V, 447.

³³Wolff, The Dream: Mirror of Conscience (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1952), 73.

³⁴ibid.

³⁵Wolff, The Dream, 73-76.

³⁶The incident bears a close relation to the exercise of "Heigh fantasye" by Januarie (Canterbury Tales, IV, 1577-87), although the latter is not specifically designated as dream.

³⁷In the original in Persius, referred to in Robinson's notes (722), the poet denies remembering a dream on Parnassus which would have made him a poet (Satira I, 9-10). Perse, Satires, ed. Léon Herrmann. Collection Latomus, vol. LIX (Bruxelles-Berchem: Latomus, 1962), 1.

³⁸Hamm, "Chaucer: 'Heigh Ymaginacioun'," MLN, 69 (1954), 394-95.

³⁹Binswanger, Being-in-the-World, 236.

⁴⁰Jung's archetypes are, of course, trans-personal factors appearing in dreams; still Jung has said: "The whole dream-work is essentially subjective, and a dream is a theatre in which the dreamer is himself the scene, the player, the prompter, the producer, the author, the public, and the critic." Collected Works, vol. 8, 366.

⁴¹Gordon, "Homer on Imagination," The Journal of General Psychology, 23 (1940), 406-7.

⁴²Homer, The Complete Works of Homer: The Iliad and The Odyssey (New York: Modern Library, n. d.), 308-9.

⁴³"Which appetites do you mean? I mean those which are awake when the reasoning and human and ruling power is asleep; then the wild beast within us, gorged with meat or drink, starts up and having shaken off sleep, does forth to satisfy his desires; and there is no conceivable folly or crime--not excepting incest or any other unnatural union, or parricide, or the eating of forbidden food--which at such a time, when he has parted company with all shame and sense, a man may not be ready to commit." Plato emphasized organization of the personality as well in discussing the higher achievements possible in the dream state: "But when a man's pulse is healthy and temperate, and when before going to sleep he has awakened his rational power, and fed them on noble thoughts and enquiries, collecting himself in meditation; after having first indulged his appetites neither too much nor too little, but just enough to lay them to sleep, and prevent them and their enjoyments and pains from interfering with the higher principle--which he leaves in the solitude of pure abstraction, free to contemplate and aspire to the knowledge of the unknown, whether in past, present or future: when again he has allayed the passionate element, if he has a quarrel against anyone--I say, when, after pacifying the two irrational principles, he rouses up the third, which is reason, before he takes his rest, then, as you know, he attains truth most nearly, and is least likely to be the sport of fantastic and lawless visions." Plato, "The Republic," Book IX in The Portable Plato (New York: Viking Press, 1958), 625-26.

⁴⁴Robertson, Preface, 499. I assume that Robertson means to allow psychological interpretation in this case. But even if he would feel uncomfortable about placing his statement in a psychological context, no change in phrasing is necessary to use it for psychological purposes.

⁴⁵Riese, "The Pre-Freudian Origins of Psychoanalysis," in Science and Psychoanalysis, ed. Jules H. Masserman (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1955), 44. That is, of course, not to say that the present events are unimportant as influences on the future.

⁴⁶Robinson ed., 565.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹Kittredge, Chaucer, 68.

²ibid.

³Kittredge, Chaucer, 68-69.

⁴French, "The Man in Black's Lyric," JEGP, 56 (1957), 234. It should be noted that French's purpose differs from the one here. French is especially concerned with refuting Kittredge's idea that the dreamer was naive.

⁵Muscantine, Chaucer and the French Tradition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), 102.

⁶ibid.

⁷Iago Galdston, "Dream Morphology: Its Diagnostic and Prognostic Significance," The American Journal of Psychiatry, 109 (1952), 287-90, discussing the point that each patient has his own style of dreaming, distinguishes four basic dream patterns which show differences in clarity and continuity and include both "the pattern of a consistent story" and a pattern "distinguished by its disjointedness and inconsistency" (287).

⁸French apparently would ask only whether something is an experience of dreaming or of being mad. Referring to dreams in Chaucer's literary sources, French says they were not "irrational." (French, "The Man in Black's Lyric," 234). He states: "One proof that the dream machinery did not seem wild and crazy to the medieval world is Dante's adoption of it in a serious work" (ibid.).

⁹McKellar, Imagination and Thinking: A Psychological Analysis (London: Cohen & West, 1957), 4.

¹⁰Bronson, Bertrand H., "The Book of the Duchess Re Opened," PMLA, 67 (1952), 870.

¹¹Freud, Complete Works, V, 353-54. He includes, for instance, king and queen as parents, elongated objects as the penis, rooms as women, and so forth.

¹²Fromm, Forgotten Language, 12.

¹³Fromm, Forgotten Language, 19. He cites as an example: "Fire . . . can be symbolic representation of inner aliveness and happiness as well as of fear, powerlessness, or of one's own destructive tendencies." (20).

¹⁴Weiss, "Dreaming: A Creative Process," American Journal of Psychoanalysis, 24 (1964), 17.

¹⁵Weiss, "Dreaming," 20.

¹⁶Freud, Complete Works, IV, 279-304, on "The Work of Condensation."

¹⁷Freud, Complete Works, IV, 177.

¹⁸Kittredge, Chaucer, 68-69.

¹⁹Schoenbaum, "Chaucer's Black Knight," MLN, 68 (1953), 121.

²⁰Crampton, "Transitions and Meaning in The Book of the Duchess," JEGP, 62 (1963), 487.

²¹Huppé and Robertson, Fruyt and Chaf (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), 52.

²²Huppé and Robertson, Fruyt and Chaf, 50.

²³Brewer, Chaucer (London: Longmans, 1960), 46.

²⁴See Jung, "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," 3-41 in The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Pantheon Books, 1959).

²⁵Bronson, "The Book of the Duchess Re-Opened," 871.

²⁶ibid.

²⁷Bronson, "The Book of the Duchess Re-Opened," 871-2.

²⁸Huppé and Robertson, Fruyt and Chaf, 33, refer to the symbolism of Christ as physician.

²⁹Freud, Complete Works, IV, 165.

³⁰Wolfgang Clemen, Chaucer's Early Poetry, trans. C. A. M. Sym (London: Methuen, 1963), 33, points out that Chaucer's version of the Alcyone story differs from those in which initiative lies with Juno. Alcyone asks for the dream herself.

³¹Calvin S. Hall, The Meaning of Dreams (New York: Harper, 1953), 23, in his section of "Dream Settings."

³²Jung, Collected Works, vol. 7, 101-2. The young man dreamed: "I am in a lofty cathedral filled with mysterious twilight. They tell me that it is the cathedral at Lourdes. In the centre there is a deep dark well, into which I have to descend." Jung comments: "One might almost suppose that the dreamer came to the doctor in a highly poetic mood and was entering upon the treatment as though it were a sacred religious act. . . ." While that was not the patient's conscious intention, Jung explains that the dream-mood was to affect his behaviour favorably.

³³Severs, "Chaucer's Self-Portrait in The Book of the Duchess," PQ, 43 (1964), 38.

³⁴Bronson, "The Book of the Duchess Re-Opened," 872.

³⁵Bronson, "Concerning 'Houres Twelve'," MLN, 68 (1953), 518.

³⁶Crampton, "Transitions and Meaning," 498.

³⁷ibid.

³⁸Jung, Collected Works, vol. 8, 244.

³⁹Jung, Collected Works, vol. 8, 250.

⁴⁰Legouis, Geoffroy Chaucer (Paris: Bloud, 1910), 71-72.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹Ellis, The World of Dreams (London: Constable, 1926), 20.

²ibid.

³Jung, Collected Works, vol. 7, 158.

⁴It might be noted that one of the experiential bases for that complex figure is phallic. Jung discusses the matter in connection with the "paradox of great and small." Collected Works, vol. 5, 124-28.

⁵Although the eagle names the dreamer "Geoffrey," the dreamer is at least somewhat fictionalized, and this study concentrates on the character. By "poet," not Chaucer but the narrator-dreamer is meant.

⁶Robinson's note to lines 117-18, identifying St. Leonard as patron saint of captives, says he could "be expected to release the wretched who were in the prison of married life." Since the poet makes no statement that the narrator is confined by marriage, but does (in the eagle's comments) comment on his being confined by books, there seems better reason to understand the release as the journey after new poetic materials.

⁷Curry, Chaucer, 207.

⁸Hall, Meaning of Dreams, 7.

⁹Hall, Meaning of Dreams, 10.

¹⁰Hall, Meaning of Dreams, 13-17.

¹¹Hall, Meaning of Dreams, 14.

¹²Allen, "A Recurring Motif in Chaucer's House of Fame," JEGP, 55 (1956), 394.

¹³Allen, "Recurring Motif," 396.

¹⁴ibid.

¹⁵Baker, "Some Recent Interpretations of Chaucer's Hous of Fame," University of Mississippi Studies in English, 1 (1960), 98.

¹⁶Baker, "Some Recent Interpretations," 99.

¹⁷Clemen, Chaucer's Early Poetry, 117.

¹⁸ibid. Clemen cites lines 1254, 1353, 1216, 1389, 1516, 2119.

¹⁹Clemen, Chaucer's Early Poetry, 120. He cites lines 1179, 1255, 1282, 1329, 1341, 2055.

²⁰ibid.

²¹"How he forswor hym ful falsly"(389); "And falsly gan hys terme pace"(392); "And when she wiste that he was fals"(393); "Eke lo! how fals and reccheles/ Was to Briseyda Achilles"(397-98) and so on.

²²Clemen, Chaucer's Early Poetry, 112.

²³Allen, "Recurring Motif," 395.

²⁴Allen, "Recurring Motif," 400.

²⁵Curry, Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences, 202 ff.

²⁶Florence Teager, "Chaucer's Eagle and Rhetorical Colors," PMLA, 47 (1932), 410-18.

²⁷Clemen, Chaucer's Early Poetry, 70.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER V.

¹Bennett, The Parlement of Foules (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 63.

²He remarks that some elements of lines 127-40 "seem to imply that the dream is to repeat the pattern of the Proem . . ." so that, presumably, references to heaven and earth should appear. But other elements of the passages show contrasts ("green and lusty May" opposed to "Disdain and Daunger") which are limited to "the vocabulary of earthly love, and in especial of amour courtois." (Bennett, Parlement of Foules, 65.)

³Bennett, Parlement of Foules, 66.

⁴Bennett, Parlement of Foules, 66-67.

⁵Bennett, Parlement of Foules, 69.

⁶Bennett also considers obligations to dream psychology that Chaucer's contemporaries might have expected. What would it have meant, he wonders, if the dream in the poem had been thought of as like those Macrobius found unimportant. He comments: ". . . if Chaucer's own dream (regarding it for the moment as 'real') could confidently have been so classified, it would not have been worth considering." (Parlement of Foules, 54). He thinks that Chaucer "is careful not to commit himself in regard to the value of the dream as such . . ." (ibid.).

⁷Freud, Complete Works, IV, 337.

⁸Similar condensations occur outside the dream context, as with Chauntecleer and Pertelote in The Nun's Priest's Tale. That fact does not, of course, remove the coincidental appropriateness of a dream feature for this poem.

⁹In their book Fruyt and Chaf which otherwise has much to offer, especially in tracing motifs which the dream picks up from Scipio's vision and in drawing one of the conclusions which must be taken into account concerning the evaluation the poem makes of love, Huppé and Robertson comment: "Since he has thought deeply of Scipio's visions, and since one tends to dream of what occupies first positions in his mind, Affrican himself appears . . ." (109). Since they cite no dream studies, they evidently intend only to paraphrase lines 99 ff.; but even as paraphrase of a stanza, their account is incomplete.

¹⁰"The relevance of Scipio's dream to the topic of love comes, of course, in Affricanus' final words, where he describes the punishment of 'likerous' folk." Frank, Jr., "Structure and Meaning in The Parlement of Foules," 533.

¹¹Silberer, "Report on a Method," 196.

¹²So say Bennett (Parlement of Foules, 45), Brewer and Bronson. Baker's idea that the poet seeks to find a justification for himself as love poet is closely related. Huppé and Robertson say that he seeks the sort of other-worldly wisdom he finds in the Dream of Scipio.

¹³Opinions vary about the significance of the reference to seeing Cytherea. Bronson feels sure it is ironic tribute:

"he saw Venus in the north-north-west when he began to write his vision, he hardly saw her at all!" (Bronson, In Appreciation of Chaucer's Parlement of Foules (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1935), 208). Bennett is convinced that, whatever the meaning of the language, Chaucer would not have "inserted so prominent a mention of the . . . planet except to concern love, and will have good import" (Parlement of Foules, 60). For the purpose in question, Huppé and Robertson's separation of Cytherea's influence on the dream from her ability to aid the poet, preserves the connection needed. She is responsible for the dream, though she cannot aid him, they maintain (Fruyt and Chaf, 109).

¹⁴Huppé and Robertson, Fruyt and Chaf, 108.

¹⁵Speaking of the narrator, Brewer says: "The account of the world given in the Dream of Scipio dissatisfies him; not because it is wrong but because it is incomplete". The Parlement of Foules (London: Thomas Nelson, 1960), 18.

¹⁶Bronson, Chaucer's Parlement of Foules, 205.

¹⁷Bennett, Parlement of Foules, 49.

¹⁸The effect which has been singled out for attention is rather like that of a dream sequence as described by Hadfield: "Dreams are a form of perseverations, for they reproduce over and over again the difficulties with which we have been confronted but not been able to face, problems we have encountered but not been able to solve, duties which were demanded of us but which we failed to fulfill." (James Arthur Hadfield, Dreams and Nightmares (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1954), 67.)

¹⁹Huppé and Robertson, Fruyt and Chaf, 144.

²⁰Bennett, Parlement of Foules, 185.

²¹Bennett, Parlement of Foules, 157.

²²Baker, "The Poet of Love and The Parlement of Foules," 107.

²³ibid.

²⁴ibid. Baker does not attempt to establish the poet's refusal to be content with his dream by the text and seems to be thinking that Chaucer himself is left with a problem which the dreamer solved within the dream.

²⁵Payne, The Key of Remembrance (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 142.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER VI

¹Payne, Key of Remembrance, 93.

²ibid.

³Payne, Key of Remembrance, 94.

⁴Payne, Key of Remembrance, 93.

⁵Griffith, "An Interpretation of Chaucer's Legend of Good Women," The Manly Anniversary Studies in Language and Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923), 32.

⁶Griffith, "Legend of Good Women," 33.

⁷ibid.

⁸Tupper, "Chaucer's Lady of the Daisies," refers to both Havelock Ellis and Freud.

⁹Tupper initially states the principle too narrowly: "Our dreams are built largely upon the sensory impressions of the preceding day, experience on which one has not yet slept for a night" ("Chaucer's Lady of the Daisies," 297). But his practice is not limited to noticing sense data, and he later corrects himself by stating: "Our study here . . . is to trace the translation of the waking thoughts of the poet's day into the picture writing of the next night. . . ." Freud does not restrict the contents of the day's residue to sensory experience, but rather speaks in various places of ideas, impressions, worries. It should perhaps again be emphasized that Freud's ideas are not given full play in my own treatment, nor are they in Tupper's. Freud is interested in memory contents of dreams as well as the day residue. Above all, he is interested in the dream thoughts which lie behind dreams and for which the dream surface is a kind of disguise.

¹⁰The quality of the lady-daisy combination is familiar in dreams as what Freud calls "condensation." But a note by Ellis may also be called to attention. "In a dream of my own, children's heads took the form and shape of flowers of various shapes and hues, though mainly of the composite order (like chrysanthemums), and their eyes looked out from between the petals," he reports (Ellis, World of Dreams, 37). In Ellis' case, the flower seems to dominate over the persons; in Chaucer's, the lady seems to dominate over the flower nature.

¹¹Loss of many indications of the poet's adoration of the daisy as of a loved one is explored by Griffith in his consideration of the two versions. Tupper feels that the transformation is based on association of the daisy with an actual historical figure. But while identification of such a figure is Tupper's own chief interest in the article, the point is not relevant to the kind of study made here. Investigation has been restricted throughout to the internal relationships of the poems. In any case, the poetic experience would seem to be served sufficiently by association of the daisy with the feminine, apart from reference to historical personages.

¹²Tupper, "Chaucer's Lady of the Daisies," 300-301.

¹³Tupper, "Chaucer's Lady of the Daisies," 301.

¹⁴Tupper, "Chaucer's Lady of the Daisies," 300.

¹⁵Tupper, "Chaucer's Lady of the Daisies," 302.

¹⁶Goddard, "Chaucer's Legend of Good Women," JEGP, 7 (1908), 87-129 and 8 (1909), 47-112.

¹⁷Lowes, "Is Chaucer's Legend of Good Women a Travesty?," JEGP, 8 (1909), 513-69.

¹⁸Tupper, "Chaucer's Lady of the Daisies," 308.

¹⁹Baum, "Chaucer's 'Glorious Legende'," MLN, 60 (1945), 377.

²⁰Baum suggests: "If Chaucer wrote LGW as a deliberate palinode to the Troilus and even, as has been suggested, as a reply to mistaken criticism, he must have written it with his tongue in check (sic). If any readers were so careless as to take his sympathy with Criseyde's weakness as an apology for feminine inconstancy, overlooking the artistic impasse into which the data of his story had led him, Chaucer's best answer was a mock palinode; and that seems to be what he gave them. He merely reversed the positions and gave them, with a smile, faithless men and faithful women." ("Chaucer's 'Glorious Legende'," 377-78).

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APPENDIX

This dream began in the opera house. I was sitting in the orchestra. I noticed that one of my close friends was sitting in one of the boxes with his fiancée who is very, very pretty. I waved and tried to talk to them but we were too far apart to hear each other. Then I was looking at my program and I believe it said something about this being the opening of a ballet that hadn't been performed for a very long time and that it was very unusual with a lot of strange choreography. And then on the stage there was a Japanese scene of a--I don't know, they were holding things and moving them up and down, tall papier-mâché figures. And then all of a sudden, the biggest curtain opened and there were a bunch of people dressed in Chinese costumes on swings. And the swings flew way out over the heads of the audience and the girls were moving their legs to make the swings propel themselves and it was very exciting. There was no singing, or very little singing so there was a kind of chattering. It was very colorful, and immediately after that everyone started to leave, but the performance wasn't over yet, and Robert Merrill (noted opera star) came out onto the stage and burst into an aria and I shouted to an old man in front of me who was ready to leave and said, "You must sit down, it's Robert Merrill singing." And he said, "Of course, dear." So he sat down, and everyone else sat down again. And then it was over and I was getting my gloves from my pocket and gathering my things together when this young man came up to us and he said, "Isn't Merrill's fiancée beautiful?" I said, "Yes, she's a very pretty girl, but of course, Merrill has his own taste, you know." And he just looked at me very oddly and then he said, "I'm a very good friend of Merrill's and I know that." I said, "Well, if you're such a very good friend of his, you must know about me." And he said, "Yes, I do." And he went on to say that Merrill had very good taste and that he hadn't used it or had kept it in reserve until the moment when he met this girl. And I said, "Of course, it isn't true because you know he used to date me and he was in love with me." And Merrill's friend said, "Oh yes, but you didn't really count," which made me feel a little annoyed. Well anyway, apparently we had gotten out of the opera house and as we were going into a bus, John didn't have change and I gave him some from my purse--John was my escort. He didn't say anything the whole time, he was just with me. I had one dime, a quarter, a couple of nickels, and about 15 pennies. Although I wanted to take the nickels, in the rush I was going to take the pennies. But John didn't want to take the pennies and I got very upset. Then it finally dawned on me that on this bus we could only ride for two stops and then we had to take a crosstown bus, and for the crosstown bus obviously we needed to save

six pennies for the transfers. After we were on the bus, the bus driver abruptly got out of his seat to everybody's dismay and he turned around and said, "Hey, ladies and gentlemen, taking care of the coin box is more important than driving. It's a psychological process." Well, then he gets up and leaves the steering wheel. I'm sitting in those three seats right behind the driver that face the other side of the bus and I look out of the window and see that we're moving down the street in a very strange way, horizontally. The pedestrians aren't aware that the driverless bus is a threat to them and they smile and wave. Then the bus noses into a construction and sort of tips up a little. The bus driver smiles as though he expected this to happen and that it was sort of a little trick he played on the passengers. Then he takes the coin box and gets back into his seat and that seemed to be the end of the scene. Then we seemed to be in the hospital where I'm supposed to sleep. John disappears and I'm with another girl. I'm not sure who it is. No, I do know who it is, it's an elderly woman, someone that I met at the opera. She's coming too. She's sort of heavy set. I have to bring her along with me because it isn't Dr. Smith that's putting on the electrodes--setting up the experiment, but it's this young man (this is a representation of the experimental situation). This young man--actually he was in the dream earlier. While we were on the bus, apparently this young man got on the bus and sat down. John said that he was ready to kill him and I said that I didn't like him either. Anyway now we're at the hospital and I see him again. He's setting up the experiment instead of Dr. Smith. And this time he's all dressed in white and he doesn't speak English too well. He makes a lot of grammatical errors. And then he brings in three girls, three very pretty girls. They look like Americans in spite of the fact that they're tawny. He sits them down and gives the instructions to tell about dreams or something like that, and is starting to put the electrodes on. And he calls them "broad" (subject laughs). I immediately stiffened and the girls stiffen. They look at him and say, "This isn't what we came for. What kind of ideas do you have? Is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, where people can do as they please and are free? Is this what we came for, so you can be free and do just what you please and we're under your subjugation?" They were very upset and they thought certainly he was going to try to rape them during the night. I laughed to this elderly woman I was with and I said, "My goodness, I just don't think he knows what the term, 'broad,' means. He must have heard it in some movie and just thinks it is a term for girls." These three girls were getting very, very upset and he was proceeding to undress them and put one of those white robes on them, and one of them walked up behind and took out a razor blade--it was very shiny. Then the girls started to threaten him. They weren't going to leave, but if he had any intention of having intercourse with them, he would have a fight on his hands. At first the situation was very amusing. Then I became very alarmed because I realized that this poor young

man was very innocent. So I went to the medicine chest and got out this big knife and my friend got out something else. But I didn't do anything. I was just watching them, and somehow the girls' attitude softened. They saw the young man's complete bewilderment. Then the three of them went back and sat down together on this low couch or bed and the young man went over to the sink. I went with him and there was a big scar on the back of his hand. It wasn't really a scar, it was just sort of a coating of blood that looked like a scar and sort of brownish. He wiped it off. Then he went to this old lady--the one I'd brought from the opera--and he had her get into the bed. He told her that if she had a dream, she was supposed to make a humming sound. She was very uneasy because she was certain that she would never make a sound, but the doctor assured her that she would. And I reassured her that she would be able to do it. Then the three girls came over to me and suggested that we should go get something to eat. Just as we were starting to leave, the buzzer woke me up (Dement, "Essay on Dreams," 214-216).

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